



THE AMERICAN FRONT

ERNEST PEIXOTTO



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

<http://www.archive.org/details/americanfront00peix>

BY ERNEST PEIXOTTO

Each volume illustrated by the author

THE AMERICAN FRONT

A REVOLUTIONARY PILGRIMAGE

OUR HISPANIC SOUTHWEST

PACIFIC SHORES FROM PANAMA

BY ITALIAN SEAS

THROUGH THE FRENCH PROVINCES

ROMANTIC CALIFORNIA

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

THE AMERICAN FRONT



Ruins in the Main Square, Fère-en-Tardenois

THE AMERICAN FRONT

BY
ERNEST PEIXOTTO

CAPTAIN, ENGRS., U. S. A.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR



NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
MCMXIX *dw*
12/81

Copyright, 1919, by
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

Published October, 1919



TO
THE MEMORY OF
THE AMERICANS
WHOSE GRAVES MARK THE BATTLE-FIELDS OF FRANCE
THIS BOOK
IS REVERENTLY INSCRIBED

PREFACE

I HAVE written this book in the form of a personal experience, and I hope the reader will pardon me if I have dwelt unduly upon the personal note; but it seemed to me that a simple eye-witness's account of the things that I had seen—many of them of exceptional historic interest—would be of value not only to those who might write of these events hereafter, but also to many of the pilgrims who will visit the battle-fields of France later on. This sort of narrative, too, it seemed to me, was best suited to accompany the drawings that I made as literally and truthfully as possible, from nature and on the spot, and that, I hope, will find their place in the iconography of the Great War. Those reproduced in this book are but a fraction of the series that I made for the War Department, being a choice of those best suited to illustrate the text.

When I reread the pages that I have written I realize how much I have left untold—left out for

PREFACE

fear of tiring the reader, for fear of clouding the continuity of my narrative. I have, for example, scarcely mentioned the splendid work of the aviators, nor have I described the wonders of the S. O. S.: the great depots at Is-sur-Tille and Gièvres, the aviation-fields at Issoudun and Romorantin, the locomotive-shops at Montoir and Nevers, the great hospitals, the camouflage depot at Dijon, and all the other vast American enterprises in France that I visited and pictured during the summer of 1918.

I wish to take this occasion also to thank the officers and men who were so kind and helpful to me: my chiefs at G. H. Q., the officers upon whose hospitality I encroached on many an occasion, and especially my three comrades whose duties were similar to my own, Captains Wallace Morgan, André Smith, and W. J. Duncan, with one or the other of whom I made most of the journeys described in this book.

E. P.

BELLEVUE (S. et O.)
May 20, 1919.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTORY NOTE	PAGE xiii
I. FROM HOBOKEN TO GENERAL HEADQUARTERS—	
I. ABOARD THE "POCAHONTAS"	3
II. ST. NAZAIRE TO CHAUMONT	16
II. THE PERIOD OF PREPARATION—	
I. WITH THE RAINBOW DIVISION	27
II. WITH THE MARINES NEAR VERDUN	43
III. IN GERMAN ALSACE WITH THE THIRTY-SECOND	56
III. CHATEAU-THIERRY AND THE MARNE—	
I. BELLEAU WOOD	67
II. ALONG THE MARNE AND UP TO FISMES	80
IV. THE TOUL SECTOR	111
V. TAKING THE ST. MIHIEL SALIENT—	
I. ABOVE LES EPARGES	125
II. INTO ST. MIHIEL	134
III. TO THE HINDENBURG LINE	145

CONTENTS

	PAGE
VI. THE GREAT MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE—	
I. BEFORE MONTFAUCON	157
II. THE ROAD TO VARENNES	170
III. THE ARMISTICE AND SEDAN	179
VII. WITH THE ARMY OF OCCUPATION—	
I. INTO LUXEMBOURG	205
II. TO THE RHINE AND BEYOND	216

ILLUSTRATIONS

THE REPRODUCTIONS OF CAPTAIN PEIXOTTO'S DRAWINGS ARE
MADE FROM U. S. OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE DRAWINGS

Ruins in the main square, Fère-en-Tardenois	<i>Frontispiece</i>
A transport with troops coming through the lock at St. Nazaire	14
Ships unloading American war material at St. Nazaire	18
Church in Baccarat	30
A typical village of the Lorraine front in which the American troops were billeted	34
Church in Badonviller	36
Barracks at battalion headquarters on the Verdun front held by American troops	46
An American observation-post	52
The village of Soppe-le-Bas in German Alsace, used as head- quarters by a regiment of American infantry	60
American soldiers billeted in reception-room of an old Benedic- tine monastery at Massevaux, in the Toul sector	62
A major's dugout in Belleau Wood	78
The Marne at Jaulgonne	84
Chartèves	88
Château-Thierry from the terrace of the old château	90
The great bridge across the Marne at Château-Thierry	92
Remains of Vaux	94
Ruined Torcy	96

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Village square in Bouresches	98
The church, Cierges	102
Reddy Farm on Hill 230	104
Ruined church at Seringes, overlooking the valley of the Ourcq	106
The market-place, Fère-en-Tardenois	108
Billets in a cell of the old monastery of Rangeval	120
No Man's Land, near Thiaucourt	150
Great shell-hole near Cierges	176
The crossroads, Buzancy	190
Dun-sur-Meuse	206
Valley of the Alzette, Luxembourg	210
Men of the 32d Division in the court of the abbey, Echternach	214
American trucks in a side-street, Montabaur	218
The Moselle at Cochem	220
First Americans crossing the Rhine	226

MAPS

	PAGE
Sketch map of the Château-Thierry region	81
Sketch map of the St. Mihiel salient	115
Sketch map of the Argonne offensive	159

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

IN July, 1914, we had come up from Portugal to our studio home near Fontainebleau. On Sunday, the 23d, the banks of the Seine at Valvins and Samois were gay with summer life. Men and women in white were fishing from punts; merry parties of young people were rowing or paddling about; on terraces along the river, bright with flowers and shaded by colored awnings, happy little tea-parties assembled, laughing and care-free; soldiers from the Forty-Sixth Infantry or the Seventh Dragoons, both Fontainebleau regiments, were loitering about out on their Sunday leave.

Then, like a bolt from the blue, the great war-cloud swept over Europe, darkening France especially with a sense of impending calamity.

By the following Sunday, the Order of General Mobilization had been posted. The river was deserted; not a being was to be seen. The boats lay moored to the banks. The gay awnings had disappeared and even the window-boxes with their

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

bright flowers had been taken in. Every shutter was drawn; every house closed. Dread and grief were already in the air.

Five days later I joined the local Communal Guard and, day or night, patrolled the roads, the fields, the woods, the river banks, watching for spies, for malefactors, for deserters, with orders to stop and question every one. Those were agonizing days that lengthened into weeks, lightened at last by the Victory of the Marne.

In October I returned to America and tried to content myself by working for various *oeuvres*. But I was not content. My age prevented me from entering active service or a training-camp.

However, in February, 1918, I was offered a captain's commission in the Engineers with duty as one of the eight artists officially attached to the American Expeditionary Forces. This I gladly accepted, and on March 4 received telegraphic notification of my appointment.

Ten days later I boarded a transport bound for France.

What I saw there forms the substance of this book. In the performance of my duty I had excep-

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

tional opportunities and witnessed portions of all the important offensives in which the American Army was engaged. I was one of the first Americans to enter St. Mihiel. I saw the beginning of the great Meuse-Argonne offensive and, with a single companion, was the first American officer to enter Sedan. So I feel that this book should have value as an eye-witness's account of certain events that few people were permitted to see.

I

FROM HOBOKEN TO GENERAL
HEADQUARTERS

I

ABOARD THE "POCAHONTAS"

ONE of the big docks of the Nord-Deutscher Lloyd in Hoboken; a rainy, lowery day in March, 1918. Two transports lay moored at each side of the dock, upon which long columns of khaki-clad troops, both colored and white, were drawn up, checked off by their officers and slowly despatched up the gang-planks aboard the gray steamers.

All officers had been notified to report on board before ten o'clock. But the day wore on until late afternoon before the last barge-load of barrack-bags and the last lot of bedding-rolls had been stowed away. Then the hawsers were cast off and we swung out into the gray, windy North River, fairly embarked upon our great adventure—the greatest adventure, I am sure, that any of us aboard, no matter what our past experiences, had ever set out upon.

THE AMERICAN FRONT

Our voyage was begun when the submarine menace was in an acute stage, and every precaution was taken from the very outset. No one but the sailors (and their naval collars were turned in) was allowed on deck as we dropped down the bay, but through a port-hole I watched the great buildings of the city move slowly by in the twilight, their countless windows twinkling with the myriad lights of their warm, steam-heated offices.

It was cold and dark when we reached the outer bay, but I could feel other boats about us though they showed no lights. There were strange flashes every little while wigwagging and blinking like huge owl's eyes, while along the horizon, mysterious flares appeared from time to time, and beams from search-lights lit great circles on the low-lying clouds.

At dinner we learned that we were aboard the transport *Pocahontas*, formerly the *Princess Irene* of the North German Lloyd fleet. Only one change had been made in the dining-room, now the officers' mess-room. A portrait of Pocahontas covered some decoration too German to be seen with pleasure under the circumstances. Though the table-silver still bore the mark of the well-known German com-

ABOARD THE "POCAHONTAS"

pany, the men sitting about the tables were totally unlike any other transatlantic crowd. Several hundred army officers gave a dominant note of khaki to the white cabin, to which the uniforms of about forty naval officers added a darker note. The two colors met at the commander's table in the centre of the room where the six executive officers of the ship sat together. The meal was served very simply by a few mess-boys aided by some green (in more senses than one) volunteer negro "strikers."

Our first day out was fine and bright with a brisk northwest wind blowing, and the morning sun showed us that we were convoyed by a big cruiser and accompanied by several other ships, two of which were brilliantly camouflaged with the "dazzle system." Our own ship presented a busy scene. The main-decks were crowded with men in khaki and the promenade-deck with officers. A guard of seventy men was mounted at eight o'clock. Gun crews were polishing and training the six-inch guns fore and aft or were at practice loading a dummy gun on the forward-deck.

Though we had more than three thousand men aboard, there turned out to be only one senior army

THE AMERICAN FRONT

officer on the ship, a major, and of the five captains two (my friend Wallace Morgan and myself) had been commissioned but a fortnight before and had had no military experience whatever.

The inevitable happened. Captain Morgan was made officer of the day the very first day out, and the same duty devolved upon me a day or two later—no light task for a novice, as there were more than forty sentries to be posted, the prisoners to be guarded, and no end of regulations to be enforced, regulations upon which the very lives of all those on board depended.

After luncheon a meeting of all officers was called, and the executive officer of the ship explained the “abandon-ship” drill, and an hour later this was put into practice for the first time. At the sounding of a particular bugle-call and the ringing of all the ship’s gongs, every man aboard was immediately to leave whatever duty he might be performing and take his appointed place by one of the life-boats or rafts. I found myself in command of collapsible boat No. 13 next to the ship’s bridge. One other officer was with me—an alert lieutenant, an ornithologist (the army is made of strange birds) who had

ABOARD THE "POCAHONTAS"

collected rare specimens in East Africa for the Smithsonian. We had three sailors and twelve soldiers with us, the latter mostly big, raw-boned fellows from the Kentucky mountains who had never seen the sea. The "abandon-ship" drill was repeated daily, and later, when in the danger zone, twice a day, at most unexpected hours, until, by dint of practice, it worked very smoothly and with surprising rapidity.

We dined that first night at five o'clock, and after dinner all lights were put out and we sat in the dark saloon listening to the victrola, the only things visible being the wrist-watches of the men and the faint luminosity of the port-holes. Every night thereafter we groped about the ship in total darkness, a few carefully screened blue bulbs placed near the floor in the corridors being the only lights permitted. Yet at a meeting of officers held next day we were further cautioned against showing lights even for an instant. No smoking was permitted on deck after dark; all flash-lights were delivered up to the adjutant until the end of the voyage. But the following morning the convoying cruiser signalled that she had seen lights in one of the forward

THE AMERICAN FRONT

holds, and a further search of the men's quarters was made. Other strict orders were rigidly enforced. Nothing was to be thrown overboard, not even a burnt cigarette or a scrap of paper, for by such bits of evidence a submarine could easily trail a ship.

My turn as officer of the day came on the morrow and it became my duty to enforce these rules.

At eight-fifteen a guard of one hundred and thirty-five men was mounted. At ten o'clock I accompanied the major commanding troops, the ship's doctor, the chief police officer, and an officer of the guard on a complete inspection of the ship. All the holds were visited; the dark corners of every bunk were carefully scrutinized with the aid of a flash-light, the doctor even peering under the berths in his search for bits of food or sputum. The menace of epidemics is ever present on such a voyage and absolute cleanliness was exacted.

Despite its thoroughness, the inspection was rapid and businesslike, our spry major leading us briskly up and down the forward ladders, through the iron bulkhead doors, and down the main hatches into the big holds amidships; out through the mess-halls and finally into the dark holds aft where the

ABOARD THE "POCAHONTAS"

colored troops were quartered. In the afternoon I made two inspections of all the forty-odd sentry-posts, visited the prisoners, and kept a watch generally for any evidence of gambling or drinking.

During the night I made three more rounds and these were a strange experience. Forward, in the fo'castle, I found the crew sleeping in hammocks suspended from the deck above, rolled like cocoons in their blankets. In the holds the soldiers' bunks, in double tiers, were placed as close together as possible, leaving just space enough between for a man to pass. From them, as I passed in the darkness, an arm, a leg, a foot, or a hand would protrude, inert, and in them I caught glimpses, in the ghostly blue light, of pale faces turned up, with eyes closed in a death-like sleep.

I questioned the guards at the hatches, at the water-butts, and those that watched the big stacks of life-belts; I prodded a negro sentry whom sleep had overcome. I skidded across the main-deck with the rain falling in torrents and in the darkness could make out the submarine watches in their boxes by the rail, anxious, alert, and the great, rolling dark billows beyond.

THE AMERICAN FRONT

I admit the dismay I felt—an artist suddenly turned soldier, in a uniform scarcely three weeks old—at being thus suddenly thrown into a position of such responsibility, giving and carrying out orders, trying to conceal my real feelings, “throwing out my chest” as I was advised to do, and striving to “look the part” to the grizzled old sergeants. I made my last round just before dawn and thankfully turned over the guard at eight-fifteen, taking off my web-belt and “gat” for the first time in twenty-four hours.

The high sea was now playing havoc with the men and the decks presented a sorry spectacle. At our mess the good sailors were chaffing their less fortunate neighbors with such grim jokes as this: “Don’t worry; you won’t be sick coming back; you’ll be in a wooden kimono.” And then to add to our comfort we were all ordered to put on our life-belts and keep them on, day and night, for the remainder of the voyage. They were of a new type, quilted and filled with kapok, with big collars that stood high around the neck, so that, arrayed in them, the officers looked like stout Sir Walter Raleighs in blue corselets with khaki sleeves.

ABOARD THE "POCAHONTAS"

On the ninth day out the weather changed for the better as we entered the danger zone. Early on the tenth morning, just as I came on deck, a calm clear sunrise revealed a strange object on the horizon that I at first mistook for some fishing-smacks. As it rapidly approached, however, I realized that it was the first of the destroyers that were coming to meet us and convoy us into port. Then a second appeared over our starboard bow and then another until a dozen of them surrounded us in a wide circle, brilliantly camouflaged like wasps, queerly striped with black and white, with spots between of yellow, gray-blue, and water-green. Like wasps too they darted about us, zigzagging across our bows, dropping astern, watchful, then, with a burst of speed, forging up ahead again.

At eight o'clock that morning I went on duty a second time as officer of the day. Toward midday the cruiser that had brought us over dropped astern, swung about and headed for home alone. Otherwise the day passed uneventfully. The sunset was beautiful and the moon rose bright and clear. "A good night for Fritz," as one of the ship's officers put it. Every one was ordered out of the lowest

THE AMERICAN FRONT

holds that night as, in case of disaster, it would be impossible to empty them quickly enough. So, as I went about the decks, in all the protected angles, I found soldiers sleeping, wrapped tight in their blankets, but shivering, nevertheless, for the head wind was bitter cold.

With the two officers of the guard, I was on deck all night. There was a tense feeling on the ship. The submarine guards and the watchers in the crow's-nests had been doubled. The officers on the bridge and the men at the guns stood with the telephone-receivers fastened to their ears. At four-thirty, in the darkness, reveille sounded and we went about rousing the sleeping figures on the decks. The next hour was the one of greatest danger—the hour of dawn. Nothing untoward happened, however, so we continued our zigzags, carefully guarded by the watchful destroyers.

That afternoon the convoy split. We headed alone toward the northeast, while the other ships dropped rapidly off toward the south, toward Bordeaux, as we afterward learned. Three of the destroyers accompanied us as our escort, and toward sunset we slowed down and for two hours zigzagged, waiting.

ABOARD THE "POCAHONTAS"

The moon came up again clear and almost full, "like a big plate in the sky," as some one disdainfully remarked, and a better night to "get a tin fish in you" could not well be imagined. For a light breeze broke the surface of the sea into small choppy waves whose shadows were just about the size of a submarine, so that, had a U-boat appeared among them, the most careful watching would probably not have detected it. Just after nightfall, however, we started off at top speed for port, making a dash for it, and dawn showed a faint streak on the horizon which rapidly developed into the bare rocky cliffs of Belle-Ile-en-Mer, well-known as the summer home of Sarah Bernhardt. We now knew for the first time that we were to land at St. Nazaire.

Two of our destroyers left us and were replaced by an aeroplane that hovered vigilant overhead, while the single remaining destroyer piloted us up the channel.

Now, with my glasses, I could make out along the shore villages and church spires, and then individual houses with buff walls and blue-slate roofs standing among pines and evergreens—the homes of France, so dear to my heart, the homes of the people for which all our hearts ached. Then I could

THE AMERICAN FRONT

begin to see figures here and there. And then at one spot, where a wide green lawn sloped from a comfortable dwelling to a white gate by the sea, a little girl came running down across the grass and out through the gate to the shore, waving as she came a bright American flag. And that tiny speck upon the shore brought a lump into my throat and moistened the eyes of the men about me. Then I saw other people waving welcoming hands.

We took a pilot aboard and entered a lock with the big *Mongolia* ahead of us and the *Kroonland* just passing out—both camouflaged with “low-visibility” colors, toned like Monet’s pictures with spots of pink and green.

St. Nazaire was not yet bored with the arrival of American transports. Far from it. At one side of the lock a crowd of ragged urchins scrambled for the coppers that the soldiers threw them. At the other side a dense crowd stood silent, watching our packed decks. Women and children predominated, many of them in deep mourning. There were a few French officers: a captain home on permission, tenderly holding his daughter as she sat upon a wall; a naval officer standing on a balcony



A Transport with Troops Coming Through the Lock at St. Nazaire



ABOARD THE "POCAHONTAS"

beside his tired-looking wife. Behind this crowd, in motors, sat some stalwart American officers, bronzed and fit.

The port clock stood at six as we slowly moved into the inner basins, crowded with shipping, and tied up at the old wharf of the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique.

II

ST. NAZAIRE TO CHAUMONT

REVERILLE sounded again next morning at four-thirty, and promptly at seven o'clock the troops went down the gangways, formed upon the dock, and by eight had marched quietly away, leaving only about forty casual officers on the ship. There we were to remain until our orders came, our major, however, permitting us to go ashore for a while later in the morning.

So Captain Morgan and I took a walk through the town—a rather stupid place as French towns go—and out by the sea to the public garden. Here we sat for a while in the sunshine—the thin weak sun of late March. There was still a distinct chill in the air, even on this favored south coast of Brittany. But the trees were beginning to bud and beds of daisies, tulips, and primroses spread their

ST. NAZAIRE TO CHAUMONT

bright colors in the grass. The birds were nesting; cats were prowling and searching their mates around the greenhouses, and nature was just waking after her long winter's sleep.

It was only when we listened that the distant rumble of thundering lorries and the spluttering of side-cars and motorcycles told us that the war was real, as they rolled along the roads behind us, hurrying troops, supplies, and messages to the cantonments back on the hills.

We were forced to remain in St. Nazaire two days longer and, chained to the ship as we were, saw little of the town or its activities. Finally our orders came. All the officers were directed to proceed at once to the casual camp at Blois for assignment to duty except three of us who were to go to the Engineer Headquarters at Angers. We made the short journey on a dull gray day, and it was a dull gray country through which we passed.

Upon our arrival we reported to the Caserne des Jardins, a spacious barracks situated on high ground at the outer edge of the town. The court was filled with soldiers looking very businesslike in trench helmets and going through their gas-mask drill,

THE AMERICAN FRONT

some of them representing the waves of gas and trying to reach the others before they could properly adjust their masks.

Colonel Black, who was commanding the drill in person, greeted us pleasantly, saying, however, that he was sorry that he could not "keep us a few days," but that our orders had already come. At the adjutant's we got these orders directing us to proceed at once to General Headquarters at Tours.

There was no train until nightfall, and as Parisians were flocking to Touraine in great numbers to escape the air-raids and the long-range guns, and the hotels were overfull, we were advised to wait for the morning train. Angers too was overflowing with refugees. I talked to a number of them, most of whom seemed greatly relieved to be safely out of the danger zone. But, in the court of the famous old feudal castle, I met an elderly gentleman and his charming daughter who treated the subject more lightly. He told us indeed of the latest raids, and of the bombing of St. Gervais, but he added: "I thought it was time to take my daughter away. Whenever she heard an *alerte*, she would go to her mirror to arrange her hair instead of descending



Ships Unloading American War Material at St. Nazaire
The work on the dock is being done by German prisoners under guard

ST. NAZAIRE TO CHAUMONT

to the cellar where she belonged.” And her saucy eyes and uptilted nose corroborated his story.

We left next morning for Tours, reporting there at the Hôtel Métropole, which was then being used as General Headquarters. Here we were at once told that our orders should have read not to General Headquarters of the Service of Supply at Tours but direct to General Headquarters at Chaumont, and that we should proceed immediately by the night train.

Indeed, this was good news and I was delighted, for the one thing I had dreaded most was a period of waiting in some camp or city far from the front.

I found in the Adjutant-General at Tours an old friend, who gave us a letter to the R. T. O., asking him to take good care of us. We dined early with another friend, a Frenchman born in Touraine but now a lieutenant in the American army, and at eight o'clock boarded our train—a special from Tours direct to Chaumont, reserved exclusively for the use of American officers and soldiers. We found a compartment kept for us in charge of a colored sergeant—a Pullman porter before the war—who tried to make us feel “as much like de ole Pullman days as

THE AMERICAN FRONT

pos'ble." All he could do, however, was to spread out some O. D. blankets on the *couchettes*, tuck them in, and leave us. Early in the morning we passed Dijon; saw Langres, perched on its steep hill, a little later; and, toward noon, reached our destination.

Thus I had completed the trip from Hoboken to General Headquarters in seventeen days—a pretty good record in the army, I thought.

It was the 1st of April and Easter Sunday, and the streets were filled with people coming from church, a large proportion of the women in black, and practically all the men in horizon-blue or khaki. Chaumont (*chauve mont*—bare hill), perched on an eminence, is a gray old town with stone-paved streets and some fine bits of architecture among its venerable houses. But, scarcely noticing the town, we walked quickly out through the crooked Rue de Bruxereuilles to a modest public garden beyond which lies an irregular-shaped open square. Here the rattle of a sentry's gun as he presented arms drew our attention to a large house whose high-pitched blue-slate roofs rose prominently behind a stone wall—the residence at that time of the American Commander-in-Chief.

Beyond it a broad avenue, shaded by a quad-

ST. NAZAIRE TO CHAUMONT

ruple row of trees, led off to the edge of the town. To the left, some little distance away, stood a barracks, a typical specimen of such buildings in France. A spacious rectangular court preceded it, shut off from the road by a plain iron grill, above whose gates the French and American flags flew side by side. This court was surrounded by stone barracks buildings, three stories high, devoid of all architectural embellishment, with long rows of evenly spaced windows surmounted by red mansard roofs. These simple buildings were the General Headquarters of the American Expeditionary Forces.

Their interiors were equally plain and businesslike. Corridors with whitewashed walls, red-tiled floors, and wooden stairways led from one bare room to another, and these bare rooms were furnished in the simplest manner with deal tables, a few straw-bottomed chairs, a good desk or two, and a red-hot iron stove. Great maps, carefully marked and pasted together, covered the walls. In outer offices sergeants, field-clerks, and junior officers attended to routine work; in inner rooms majors, colonels, and generals directed the policy of the A. E. F. and decided and put through matters of importance.

Upon my first visit, I entered the centre door of

THE AMERICAN FRONT

the main building, climbed one flight of stairs, and turned down a corridor toward the office I was seeking, when, as I passed a door like all the others, my heart jumped as I read, printed upon it in black on a plain square of white paper:

GENERAL PERSHING

I was in and out of headquarters a number of times within the next few days. An official artist was a strange bird to classify in the army but, after some deliberation, it was finally decided to attach us to G 2-D, one of the branches of the Intelligence, and we were asked to suggest under what conditions we thought we could best accomplish our work.

It was further decided that we should take station in Neufchâteau, a town to the north of Chaumont about an hour's ride by motor, hence that much nearer the front.

Neufchâteau is well-known to most officers who did field service in the A. E. F., for nearly every one passed through it on his way to or from the American front. When first we went there, it was Headquarters of the First Army Corps. Later the

ST. NAZAIRE TO CHAUMONT

First Army was organized in it, and finally it became Advance Headquarters of the S. O. S. Hence it was always crowded with officers, who gathered toward evening in the Club Lafayette for dinner and a smoke afterward in the café. So, from Neufchâteau as our base, we prepared to set out for the various sectors in which our troops were gathered.



II

THE PERIOD OF PREPARATION

I

WITH THE RAINBOW DIVISION

MY first trips to the American front were made in April and May, 1918. The redoubted German spring offensive had been launched and was pitilessly biting its way into the Allied lines. But, with the single exception of the First that was up near Cantigny, no American divisions were as yet engaged in action. Most of them were still in training in back areas or were holding certain quiet sectors while they learned the intricacies of trench warfare, and released veteran French divisions for combat.

The Second Division, the Marines, were in the trenches east of Verdun; the Twenty-Sixth was in the Toul sector; the Forty-Second in the Vosges, and toward the middle of May the Thirty-Second moved into Alsace.

It was now my purpose to visit each of these sec-

THE AMERICAN FRONT

tors. We official artists, as we were called, had meanwhile been given our papers, which allowed us the greatest freedom of action. They were signed by the chief of our section at G. H. Q., and their second and third paragraphs read:

“You are authorized to make sketches and paintings anywhere within the Zone of the American Army in accordance with instructions already given you.

“It is the wish of the Commander-in-Chief that all commanding officers extend to you all possible assistance in the carrying out of your orders.”

As only three of us had as yet arrived, our decisions were easily made, and we chose, for our first experience, the area occupied by the Forty-Second, the Rainbow Division, composed, as every one knows, of National Guard elements from many different States, whence its name.

So, on the 20th of April, we left Chaumont, heading direct for Nancy, scarcely noting anything on the way, so eager were we to get up to the front. But, at the top of the hill beyond Pont St. Vincent, we did pause to enjoy the view of the fair capital of Lorraine lying spread out beneath us, with its crowded red roofs, its towers, spires, and high church

WITH THE RAINBOW DIVISION

gables in the centre and, radiating from them, long streets, bordered with houses, reaching out like tentacles to vassal villages that lay about it. Seen from this hilltop, the city looked quite intact, and even as we speeded through its silent streets with their doors barricaded and shutters tightly drawn there was little evidence of destruction.

This impression we modified later, upon our return. But for the present we turned out quickly upon the highroad to Lunéville. The tall towers of the church at St. Nicolas-du-Port, one of the finest in Lorraine and hallowed with memories of Jeanne d'Arc, soon rose against the sky. Then we threaded streets bordered with workmen's houses that led to Varangéville and Dombasle, centres of the great salt-mines and other industries of the Meurthe-et-Moselle. These towns, as well as Lunéville, through which we now passed, were full of French soldiers, for we were running practically parallel with the front, though at some little distance behind it.

But at Azerailles the men's uniforms changed from horizon-blue to khaki as we entered the zone held by our troops. Soon after, toward six o'clock,

THE AMERICAN FRONT

we reached Baccarat, then and long after an important Division Headquarters of the American army, and reported at once to the Chief of Staff.

I was assigned to a billet in a house near the railroad-station, and on my way to it found the streets filled with our soldiers, lined up before the commissary, talking in groups on the corners, listening to the band that was playing in the court of the hospital, while heavy trucks, ambulances, and long wagon-trains went rattling over the rough paving-stones.

Baccarat before the war had been a town of some importance. In the very first onrush the Germans thrust through it, and when they were driven back again, the bridge over the Meurthe was blown up and the faubourg beyond it reduced to ruins. During this short occupation the house in which I was billeted was used by the German general as his headquarters. Its owner, an elderly lady, remained in it and still occupied it when I was there.

She told me her story—how like, alas, so many that I afterward heard. In a large outhouse beyond the rear court she employed many women making the embroideries for which the country hereabouts



Church in Baccarat

WITH THE RAINBOW DIVISION

is quite famous. When the Germans came they seized the entire stock, some two hundred thousand francs' worth, and made off with it. Later, when they were driven out of the town, they took, for the women who had come with them, all her valuables—jewelry, furs, silverware, etc.—loaded them in trucks with all the linen and blankets and left, whence her apologies to me for the poor bedding that was all that she could offer me.

On the following day, in the late afternoon, as I was sketching among the ruins across the river, I saw a band and a camion standing in front of the hospital behind the church, and, presently, as the band began to play a funeral march, I realized that, for the first time, I was to see an American soldier buried in France. So, as the slow-moving cortège came along, I joined in behind.

The band marched at the head followed by a firing-squad of sixteen; then an army chaplain walked in front of a motor-truck with three pall-bearers at each side, and its canvas flaps turned back enough to disclose the coffin covered by a new American flag. Behind it marched a lieutenant and the men of the platoon to which the soldier had belonged—

THE AMERICAN FRONT

a victim to duty, killed, I was afterward told, in a hand-grenade accident.

Slowly the little procession passed the church, ascended the hill, and turned out into the open fields beyond. Two thin lines of bare trees bordered the muddy road; a sombre sky hung leaden overhead and a drizzling rain was falling. The hills fell away to the right, and in the valley the town was visible, backed by the hills near Raon l'Etape, still powdered with the last of the winter's snows. The boom of the cannon off at the front came frequently to our ears, punctuating the music and the roll of the muffled drums. Three women in deep black had joined the procession, weeping bitterly.

As it topped a final rise, a military graveyard came into view, its high gray crosses so close together that they formed a solid phalanx. At the intersection of each a tricolored cockade was placed, and these, from a distance, in the uncertain light, looked like the faces of spectres that, silent, mysterious, stood with outstretched arms awaiting the arrival of their newest companion—a weird, uncanny spectacle that sent a shiver up the spine. Above them, as if borne aloft in their hands, rose double crosses

WITH THE RAINBOW DIVISION

of Lorraine made of boughs, and over the rustic entrance of the cemetery appeared the words:

MORTS POUR LA FRANCE

A grave-digger, with his sabots and corduroys stained with new red earth, stood by a fresh-dug grave in a corner reserved for Americans. The coffin was carried to the edge of the grave, the firing-squad took its position; the chaplain's droning voice intoned the simple service, punctuated at intervals by the sound of the distant guns; the three volleys rang out in the stillness; then "taps." And then, from a little copse beyond, a second bugle, clear and strong, a perfect echo of the first, sounded "taps" again, like the voice of resurrection! How lonely, how desolate it seemed to be buried in this far corner of a foreign land! How often thereafter was I to witness this same scene and hear the three volleys in the afternoon stillness!

We decided to go next day as far out into the trenches as our superior officers would permit us, so started by the main road to Raon l'Etape, turning off there toward the Alsatian border, eastward,

THE AMERICAN FRONT

through a succession of villages filled with American troops.

This was my first glimpse of them in their billets, so I noted their surroundings with interest. The towns in this part of Lorraine are very primitive. The church forms the focal point, from which a few muddy streets radiate, there being usually one long street traversing the town from end to end in the general direction of the highway. Manure piles, placed in front of most of the houses, drain themselves into the open gutters of the roadways, so that, especially in the spring and autumn, these are grimy and slippery with malodorous mud.

A few *maisons bourgeoises* are grouped in the centre of the town, but most of the houses are of a very simple type and quite alike, one to another. Their plain fronts are divided into halves. One half constitutes the dwelling proper, two stories high, with a door and two windows below and three windows above. The other half is a sort of stable and barn combined, entered through a big doorway, wide and high enough to admit a large farm-wagon. In these barns, for the most part, our men were billeted, twenty to fifty in each, rolled at night in



A Typical Village of the Lorraine Front in which the American Troops were Billeted

WITH THE RAINBOW DIVISION

their O. D. blankets, sleeping in the straw. Field-kitchens were also sheltered under these big doorways, and before them the dough-boys lined up for mess.

In the streets, round the pumps and stone horse-troughs, the men were continually washing in the running water, though the air was still nipping and frosty—brushing their teeth, soaping their hair, their arms, their necks; shaving before their little steel mirrors or bits of broken glass; washing the cakes of sticky mud from their rubber boots—in short, striving against all obstacles to keep clean.

Dressed in their khaki uniforms they looked strangely alike, emanating a powerful impression of ruddy, clean-shaven youth; of lithe, athletic bodies with strong, clean limbs—the only really youthful army in the field in 1918.

And I noted then, as I did repeatedly thereafter, their good humor, their constant cheerfulness, their boyish healthy pleasures, joking, “scrapping”; teasing the old peasant women who could not understand them; sitting toward evening with the girls upon the doorsteps.

Neufmaisons was a typical village of this type,

THE AMERICAN FRONT

and later on we spent a day there sketching. But this first morning we pushed on as far as Pexonne, reporting there to regimental headquarters, where, owing to the poor visibility—it was a foggy, rainy day—we were allowed to proceed to Badonviller. The road was camouflaged and pitted with shell-holes. The houses along it were mere ruins. The big guns now and then sounded unpleasantly near.

Badonviller was in ruins, for it had been in the front line since the beginning of the war. When our troops moved in a few weeks before, the Germans, of course, knew all about it and gave them a hot welcome. The town bore unmistakable evidence of this last bombardment, and our men were busily engaged clearing away *débris* of all descriptions.

Everybody was living in dugouts. Some of these had been made quite comfortable with easy chairs, mirrors, bureaus, and other furniture borrowed from the rooms above. We lunched at the major's mess, and listened to tales of recent raids told by the young scout lieutenants.

Afterward we were taken out into the trenches, each accompanied by a runner, who acted as guide



Church in Badonviller



WITH THE RAINBOW DIVISION

and orderly. In this quiet sector, this our first visit to the trenches was not as thrilling as we had expected, as, beyond the trenches themselves, with their duck-walks, fire-steps, sand-bags, and carefully braided revetments, there was little to be seen.

That night, in the Officers' Club in Baccarat, I met a friend, Major Tracy of the Camouflage, with a couple of his coadjutors, and it was a fortunate meeting, for during the next few days they guided us about, showing us things we might not otherwise have seen until much later on.

We visited the big gun emplacements near Reherry, where the old "Fighting Sixty-Ninth," now the 165th Infantry, was quartered, and saw three eight-inch howitzers hidden in an apple-orchard and so well camouflaged with nettings that at a distance of a hundred yards it was impossible to detect them; we skidded through the slimy mud to a battery of 75s, and watched their lieutenant sodding the top of his dugout, which he did so carefully that, when he had finished, the most perfect aerial photograph could not have revealed its presence; then listened to him as he discoursed upon the merits of his guns, clean, glittering, and spotless

THE AMERICAN FRONT

in spite of the mud, accompanying his explanations with the loving caresses of a father showing a favorite child.

Another day, with three artillery officers, we went well up to some advanced positions beyond Pexonne to see a battery of 75s buried underground in dugouts scooped in a hillside. While I was busily sketching their rabbit-warren, I scarcely noted the brown smoke-puffs of shrapnel that kept bursting nearer and nearer, until I saw a lieutenant's head appear from a dugout and heard his voice calling: "Come in out of that, captain; that's a very unhealthy spot just now; they're trying to get our range. . . ."

One evening I attended a "show" given by the men of the French division upon our right. The theatre, though capable of holding more than a thousand people, was packed to the doors. There was a sprinkling of women and tradesmen from the town, but the vast majority of the audience was military—row upon row of officers in blue or khaki down-stairs, and soldiers packing the galleries or standing at the back as on a Caruso night at the Opera.

WITH THE RAINBOW DIVISION

Near the stage the gold oak-leaves on a French general's hat sparkled conspicuously as he stood, surrounded by his staff, awaiting the arrival of our general, who came in just before the curtain rose. A band played exhilarating marches, and was replaced for the incidental music and accompaniments by a string orchestra also made up of soldiers.

The "stunts" were varied and amusing, some of the performers being quite well-known in the Paris music-halls. There were the heroic recitations and sentimental songs dear to the French heart; there were comics whose songs were full of Gallic license; there were fearful females fresh from the trenches, with blonde hair and painted lips, who displayed their silk stockings and lingerie with startling abandon; there were saynettes and bits of tragedy, and it was long after midnight when we groped our way home in the darkness—to be awakened at day-break by the antiaircraft guns.

After a five days' stay in the sector we started back to Chaumont. As we entered Lunéville a French infantry regiment was coming through and we stopped to watch it go by. How fine they looked, these weather-beaten veterans in gray steel helmets,

THE AMERICAN FRONT

carrying their full marching equipment, and swinging along to the "Sambre et Meuse," with their guns held so high that, with the thin murderous bayonet that topped them, the narrow street fairly bristled with them, like the tall pikes of ancient men-at-arms.

Farther on in the town we stopped to see the palace that Stanislas, ex-King of Poland, father of Marie Leszinska, built as his Versailles, a vast, pompous pile of masonry that has long been used as a cavalry headquarters, residence of some well-known general who commanded a crack division, which, like the famous *division de fer* of Nancy, assured the defense of the frontier. In the centre of its great forecourt, bestriding a rampant charger, stands a theatrical statue of Lasalle, "*le beau sabreur*," the gallant young general of *cavaliers légers*, those winged couriers of the battle-field that once were the heroes of the fight, but are now replaced by real winged messengers, the Guynemers and Foncks of the aviation.

We reached Nancy by noon and decided to stop and spend the night so as to see the condition of the city. We first turned into the Place Stanislas and found its smart majesty quite intact. Not one

WITH THE RAINBOW DIVISION

of Héré's edifices that surround it had been touched and even Lamour's beautiful grills, superbly wrought and gilded, that have served as models for the iron-work of many an American millionaire's palace (without his knowing it), remained uninjured along one side of it and up the Place de la Carrière beyond. In the gardens of the Pépinière, shaded by ash, aspens, and stately elms, a band was playing to a Sunday crowd, and all seemed strangely normal and peaceful.

But when we went to see the ducal palace we found its Gothic Grande Porterie completely barricaded and the tombs of the dukes in the Church of the Cordeliers adjoining buried under mountains of sand-bags. The Porte Désilles at the end of the Cours Léopold took on a new interest, for, built in 1785, was it not designed to commemorate as well as the birth of the Dauphin the alliance of France with the United States?

Half a century ago Nancy, though the intellectual centre of eastern France with a famed university and scientific schools, counted only fifty thousand inhabitants. But after the War of 1870 it grew rapidly, many of the citizens of Metz and Strasbourg, unwilling to live under German rule, emigrat-

THE AMERICAN FRONT

ing to it and helping to develop its many industries, which, owing to its situation at the junction of a system of canals that connect it with the Rhine, Saône, Rhone, Meuse, and Marne, became quite important. Thus, in 1914, Nancy had become a thriving city of a hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants, a large proportion of whom lived in the newer quarters that sprang up around the Place Thiers.

It was up in these newer quarters around the railroad-station that most of the damage from air-raids was done. Every house-front up there was spattered with the marks of high explosives. Every window was glassless and most of the buildings had yawning breaches in their façades. Even many of those that from the exterior looked quite intact were mere ruins within. One big group of buildings had just been bombed a night or two before and lay disembowelled like a poor picador's horse, with its entrails—timbers, stone, furniture, laths, and plaster—dragging in the street. Of the hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants, only forty thousand had been able to hold out during the one hundred and eighty raids!

II

WITH THE MARINES NEAR VERDUN

THE first time I saw the Marines was on top of the Côtes de Meuse, where they were having their first experience in the trenches.

We had left Neufchâteau early, passing through Gondrecourt and Ligny on the way, and had lunched at the big Popotte des Officiers, a French mess in the busy Ville Basse at Bar-le-Duc. We had taken no time to visit the picturesque Ville Haute—ancient residence of the Dukes of Bar—but had pushed straight on via Vavincourt to Souilly.

In the broad main street of Souilly there were few soldiers, but, on the other hand, before the doors of its stone houses there were many sentries, so we easily guessed it to be, as it was, a very important French Corps headquarters. At one crossroads we were saluted by no less than four sentries: an

THE AMERICAN FRONT

American M. P., an Italian *carabiniere*, a *poilu*, and a *chasseur alpin*.

Beyond Souilly the road was full of movement. American artillery trains were coming down and with them long strings of motor-trucks loaded with Marines, thundering along at top speed until the earth fairly trembled with them. Then we began to pass regiments of *chasseurs alpins* marching up, and we realized that a relief was going on. Between Ancemont and Dieue we crossed the marshes of the Meuse and soon arrived at Sommedieue.

Here the streets and the *place*, camouflaged with long strips of burlaps hung across it *en echelon*, were swarming with soldiery. The dark-blue chasseurs were massing at one end, getting ready for billeting. Our Marines, in olive-green, were gathered over by the river, washing, shaving, scrubbing in their efforts to get clean after their stay in the trenches. Superb fellows they were, these "leather-necks," these "hard-boiled guys," as they liked to call themselves, who were so soon to become famous at Belleau Wood—fit comrades for the renowned "blue devils" of France who were gathering to relieve them.

We left our car in the square, walked out over

WITH THE MARINES NEAR VERDUN

the river and beyond the last house in the village, and I, for one, wondered whither we were going, when our guide turned up into a dense grove of evergreens. There, hidden securely away among the pine-trees and further artfully concealed with a natural camouflage, we found Division Headquarters in a group of wooden huts that looked like a camp in California.

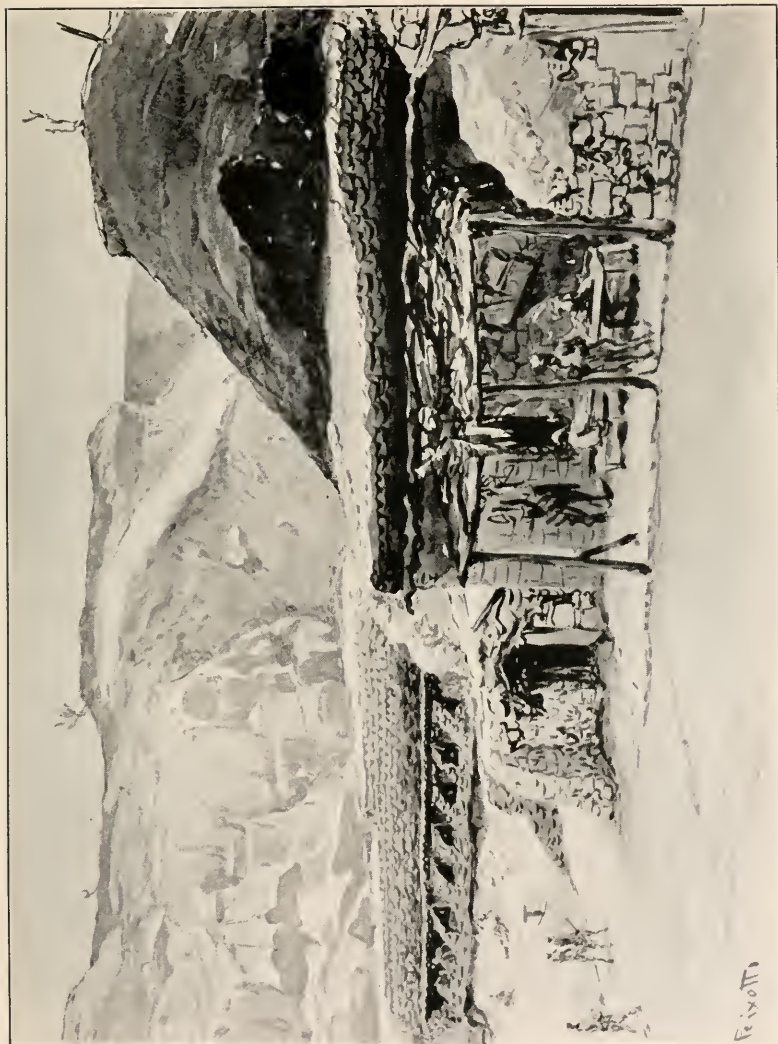
The Chief of Staff greeted us dubiously, explaining that the division was "on the move," and that he did not know whether we could go up or not. But, after telephoning to Brigade Headquarters, he gave us permission to proceed. So, returning to our car, we motored out through the Forest of Amblonville to a big main road—the national highway from Verdun to Metz—and I read upon a milestone: "Verdun, 11 kilometres." Beyond the famous Fort du Rozellier, that bars this important road, we turned into the woods again and found, as at Sommedieue, Brigade Headquarters cunningly concealed in a dense forest.

The general's aide-de-camp received us and, as we finished washing up after our long ride, told us that the general would like to see us. We found

THE AMERICAN FRONT

him waiting outside the hut—General Harbord, then a brigadier just up from G. H. Q., where he had been Adjutant-General, a handsome figure of a soldier, dressed with such great care that, in this country of sticky mud, I have never forgotten his immaculate riding-boots. He explained that he could not keep us at headquarters that night, but would send us up in his car to a battalion headquarters in a part of the line that he thought very interesting.

A few miles' ride along a camouflaged road brought us to a point at the bottom of a hill where we were told that the motor could go no farther. So, getting out, we walked on until we found, hidden away in an abandoned quarry, some barracks and magazines buried under row upon row of sand-bags. The officers' quarters in another quarry farther on consisted of a number of tiny chambers dug in the solid earth and faced up with stone, a high talus protecting their doors and windows from flying shell fragments. The battalion commander, Major Sibley, greeted us most cordially, had some supper reheated for us (it was long after mess-time), and then sent us in care of a lieutenant down into the trenches.



Barracks at Battalion Headquarters on the Verdun Front Held by American Troops

The roofs were heavily protected by sand-bags, and dugouts adjoined the barracks

WITH THE MARINES NEAR VERDUN

Battalion headquarters were on the top of the Côtes or Hauts de Meuse, a long line of flat-topped hills that dominate the Woevre. The main highway from Verdun to Metz intersects these hills by taking advantage of a cleft between two of them. About midway down the slope there stood a village, Haudiomont, now but a few crumbling walls, and around this village our first-line trenches bent. Two companies of the Sixth Marines were holding these trenches, and I was to stay with one company commander while my companion stayed with the other.

Our guide led us down the hill through the communicating trenches that wriggled and doubled on each other—*boyaux*, as the French call them—filled with argillaceous mud, ankle-deep, squashy, red, and so slippery that it was a constant effort to keep one's feet. Sometimes there were duck-walks, and then the going was better. At last we reached Haudiomont, or, more exactly, an outlying group of its buildings, now mere fragments of walls cutting shapeless silhouettes against the sky.

Here I decided to stay with Lieutenant Noble, who, though but twenty-four, was commanding a

THE AMERICAN FRONT

company of two hundred and ninety men, a company that specially distinguished itself at Belleau Wood. He proposed a walk before dark, and, looking critically at my shoes, which were very stout ones, said: "Those won't do; you'd better let me fit you out with rubber boots." When I had put these on, with my "tin hat," my gas-mask at the "alert," and my trench cane, I started on my first real tour of the trenches.

The men, as we passed, stood flattened against the platted revetments, watching. Every little while the *pap-pap-pap* of a machine-gun sounded startlingly close, for the Boche trenches at certain points were only a hundred yards away, and at others were even connected with ours by bits of abandoned *boyaux*, now choked with barbed wire. Thus we slowly made our round of the little sector held by Lieutenant Noble's company, he meanwhile taking careful note of everything—machine-guns, automatics, rockets, hand-grenades, having some of the latter thrown so as to test them. Here and there a ruined bit of wall appeared above the parapet—all that remained of some peasant's comfortable home.

Finally we reached the farthest outpost near what

WITH THE MARINES NEAR VERDUN

had been the railroad-station with the Hotel de la Gare opposite. Here, I was told, the raids usually came in, and as the machine-guns rattled my companion remarked: "They're at it early to-night; I wonder if there's something doing." We then began our trip back, crossing under the Metz road by a tunnel, seeing some strongholds organized in the houses that once bordered the road—houses that still bore the livid marks of liquid fire burned upon their faces from the last attack, and ended our tour at Lieutenant Noble's dugout.

This dugout was in a small cellar. A door ripped from some old Brittany *armoire* closed its entrance, over which an army blanket also hung, so that, when the door opened, no streak of light could be seen. The chief piece of furniture was a large square table on which were spread maps, photographs, and papers. A fat, short candle sputtered on a bit of wood that did duty as a candlestick. A rude chair, a mirror, a primitive fireplace made of a few bricks, and a soldier's bed made of a few boards, chicken-wire, and straw, completed its furnishings. My host took his place by the table and told me to take what comfort I could out of the bed, adding:

THE AMERICAN FRONT

"I'm going to let you live my life to-night just as I live it. I'll show you the orders as they come in, and you can see what a company commander's night is like in the trenches."

So, as the orderlies and runners came in with their despatches, he showed these to me: an important change in orders for rockets and signals to go into effect at once; orders for marching on the morrow and what to carry; the Intelligence report for the day; company papers to sign, etc. At times, as the door opened, the bright white light of flares, more brilliant than any moonlight, lit up the walls outside; and every little while I went outdoors to watch these flares and star-shells illuminate the dead expanse of No Man's Land. Volleys from machine-guns, sharp and sudden and short rattling barrages from the 75s kept up an intermittent racket. At midnight an orderly appeared, lit a smoky fire, and brought in a hot supper—the principal meal in the trenches, for only at night can cooking be done—a steaming bowl of soup full of meat and vegetables, canned peas, a cup of chocolate, and thick slabs of buttered bread—a very substantial meal.

I was especially anxious to see dawn break over

WITH THE MARINES NEAR VERDUN

No Man's Land, so had arranged to have a runner come for me at 3 A. M. and take me to an observation-post. He arrived upon the minute and led me off in the same general direction I had taken the night before, his gun with its fixed bayonet catching a glint of light now and then. It was still so dark that the men could just be seen standing on the fire-steps peering into the night. Suddenly a gun went off quite near me; then others up and down our line. Rifle-shots are contagious in the night. Why did he shoot? He thought he saw something moving in the darkness.

We reached a ruined building where, I was told, there was an observation-post up sufficiently high to command an extended view. I climbed some rickety steps and found myself on a broken flooring with a few roof-beams overhead, between which I could see the stars. One corner of the ruined walls was screened off with some old cloths and blankets. Inside this enclosure I found a chink in the wall, the blankets being hung so as to prevent light from showing behind this chink.

With my eye glued to this loophole, I peered out into the darkness. The first streaks of dawn soon

THE AMERICAN FRONT

came, and revealed the smashed timbers of the railroad-station and crumbling walls of the Hotel de la Gare quite near. A blasted tree or two still stood, sentinel-like, along the white road to Metz. The fields—if fields they could be called—beyond were pitted and pockmarked with shell-holes, and just below me, in the immediate foreground, was a vast tangle of barbed wire, torn and twisted into perfect thickets, among which I could distinguish, here and there, the braided revetments of our trenches. Along the nearer edge of the wooded hill beyond lay the German first-line outposts.

The sharp morning air was cold and still, and in this stillness I heard a cough—for every sound was audible—then the tac-tac-tac of a machine-gun; then silence again. And then, as the day brightened, the birds awoke and filled the silent waste with the carol of their voices. A gray cat climbed softly down a fallen beam below me hunting for his breakfast. Then came the sound of low voices quite near and, though I could hear no words, the familiar American twang sounded strangely out of place in these surroundings.

The machine-guns were now actively astir again



An American Observation-Post

In the former village of Haudiomont, on the front line near Verdun, overlooking the road to Metz



WITH THE MARINES NEAR VERDUN

and occasionally the 75s awoke the echoes. The sun rose in a cloudless sky, and the mystery, the witchery, the dread of the night were gone.

I climbed back to headquarters through the viscous mud that glued to my boots at every step until my feet became enormous and heavy as lead. Then walked six kilometres back to Brigade Headquarters, admonished as I departed to "keep over to the left behind the camouflage, for otherwise remember you are under observation." I lunched at the general's mess and, as we were finishing, the French liaison officer, who had made the entire Verdun campaign, proposed that we motor over to those historic fields.

It was but a short ride. We soon left the friendly cover of the woods and came out into the utter desolation of the Verdun hills. There we got out and began to walk.

As we advanced the spectacle was terrifying. Shell-hole overlapped shell-crater; the earth was ploughed and torn, blown up and smashed down again. Every step was a pitfall. Weapons of every description, grenades, canteens, shells, casques, accoutrements, bits of uniforms stained with a putrid

THE AMERICAN FRONT

red-brown varnish, and in certain shell-holes whitening bones sticking out of the stinking water, and in one a boot floating with a foot still in it. Though it was Maytime, the only vestige of green that Nature could bestow was a few blades of grass on the edges of the new craters.

“Do you know where you are?” asked the French officer. “No? You’re in the village of Fleury.”

I had already seen a few ruined villages, and I have seen many since, but few have I beheld ruined as Fleury was ruined. Usually a bit of the solid masonry of a church is left, or a few segments of wall or a road that was once a street, but here at Fleury no trace of a town remained; not a gate nor a doorway nor a bit of broken wall rose above the utter desolation. Nothing but stones and bits of furniture; beams and broken household utensils, like the *débris* that accumulates in vacant lots on the outskirts of great cities.

And when I raised my eyes to the far horizon the spectacle was everywhere the same. Not a tree; not a green thing. Hills as bare as the palm of your hand. Where once had been orchards, vineyards,

WITH THE MARINES NEAR VERDUN

and well-kept woods, now were lunar solitudes, vast stretches of desert, utterly devoid of life.

Not utterly, however, for down in a hollow I saw the fierce tongues of batteries and heard the roar of their voices and I knew that, hidden away in the bowels of the earth, in great excavations, men were hiding. Off to the north rose Douaumont and to the eastward Vaux, for we were standing just where the last German waves had beat themselves in vain against the adamant ring of outer fortresses.

And toward the southward I could see a citadel, two spires, some gaping roofs, and chimneys without smoke—Verdun, the City Impregnable, whose name will go down through the ages linked with the greatest battle in history.

III

IN GERMAN ALSACE WITH THE THIRTY-SECOND

IN the beginning of May, I heard, through a friend attached to G 2 of the First Army Corps, that one of our divisions was going into line down in German Alsace near the Swiss border, in a sector that the French had conquered in the beginning of the war and had held ever since. I spoke of this to my chief at G. H. Q., and he promised to get me down there—a promise he kept so well that, a few days later, he took me down himself in a big Cadillac.

I look back upon this trip as something in the nature of an excursion. We started on a beautiful May morning, the air clear and crisp; the sun, for the first time, was bright and warm; the hills and fields clothed with their new spring dress. One by one the towns went flying by: Mirécourt, headquarters

IN GERMAN ALSACE

of gallant General Castelnau; Epinal, with its memories of the *images* dear to every French child's heart; Remiremont, set in its ring of verdant hills. No sign of war was anywhere in evidence save, here and there in the villages, groups of soldiers in horizon-blue *en repos*.

At Le Thillot we chose the short and steep road over the mountains via the Ballon d'Alsace, one of the most famous view-points in the Vosges. A series of sharp zigzags soon brought us well above the valleys until these lay spread out beneath us like colored contour maps, and then were blotted out by forests of evergreens where woodmen with their oxen were hauling logs or patiently stacking cord-wood in neat graded piles along the roadside. The road became steeper. Our powerful engine snorted but took the hills easily. The woods opened and barren uplands appeared.

A sentry at a barrier stopped us to inspect our magic pink headquarters pass just as we reached the highest point of the road. The colonel proposed a climb to La Vierge, a huge figure of the Virgin that tops the Ballon d'Alsace. He set off at a great pace, climbing around the fields of barbed wire that

THE AMERICAN FRONT

defended the summit until we reached the statue that dominates a vast sweep of the Rhine Valley. The buttresses of the Ballon plunged steeply down into the valleys that I was to visit within the next few days. Thann, Massevaux, Mulhausen, Altkirch lay spread in the plain, and along the horizon we could feel, though we could not actually see it, the Rhine, then the goal of all our desires.

We coasted down through the woods again and arrived at Belfort, France's great frontier fortress, toward four o'clock. The town had suffered sorely from air-raids, but its life was still going on. And, as I passed through it, I caught a glimpse of the great Lion, more than seventy feet long, that Bartholdi carved from the solid red sandstone cliff that holds Vauban's famous citadel upon its summit—the Lion de Belfort who, raising himself on his haunches, growls toward Germany, commemorating Denfert-Rochereau's heroic defense of the city during the terrible winter of 1870–1871.

Through the ancient Porte de Brisach we left the city and followed out the so-called "trouée de Belfort," the vulnerable gap between the Vosges and the Jura, the possession of which by an enemy

IN GERMAN ALSACE

would lay France open to an invasion from the east. Finally we reached La Chapelle-sous-Rougemont.

In this small town were established the headquarters of the division—which I found to be the Thirty-Second—to which I was going. As we arrived, the inspiring notes of a band of the *chasseurs alpins*, those blue devils so intimately connected with the Vosges campaigns, greeted our ears, setting our pulses going with the fast rhythm of the marches and the brilliant flourishes of their trumpets.

Division Headquarters occupied an ordinary Adrian barracks divided into offices by rough pine partitions. Into one of these offices my chief led me and introduced me to the division commander, Major-General Haan, the man who had trained the division in Waco, Texas, brought it to France, led it afterward into its first fights, and made it what it was, one of the crack divisions of the A. E. F., the only National Guard unit chosen later to form part of the Army of Occupation on the Rhine.

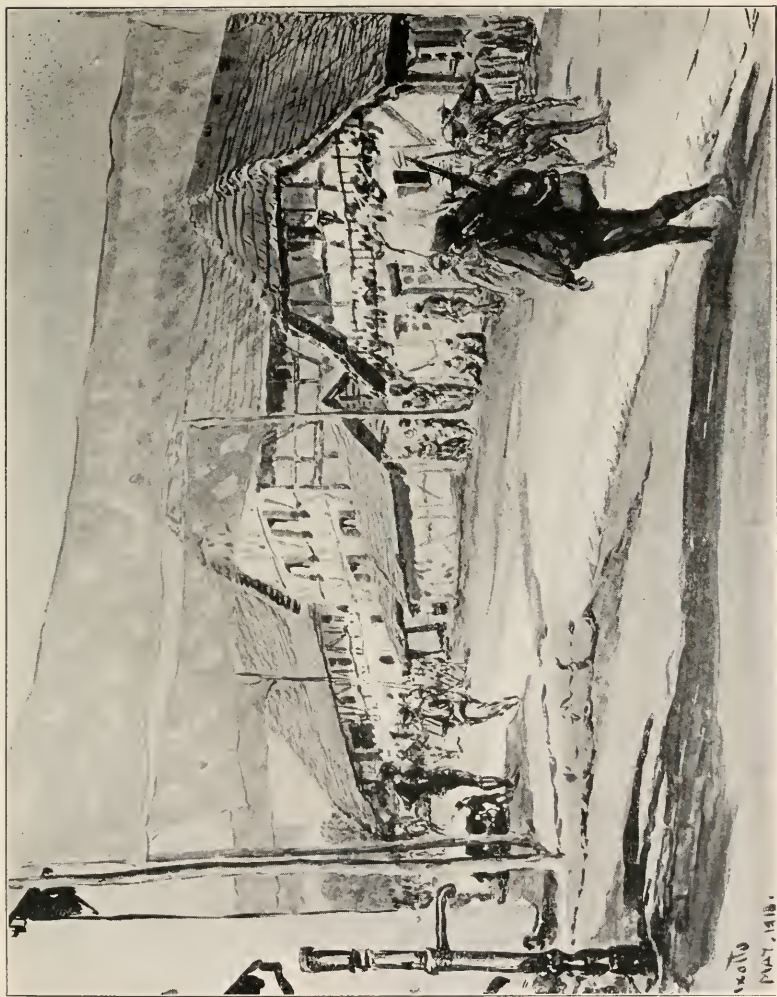
He was more than kind to me during my stay with his men, and his aide-de-camp guided me to the most interesting points in the front line. Together we visited the observation-posts beyond

THE AMERICAN FRONT

Soppe-le-Bas and peered through narrow slits in these steel boxes at Ammertzwiller and Bernhaupt-le-Bas, ruined villages in No Man's Land where the Germans had their O. P.'s. Again, we walked out along the abandoned Canal du Rhône to a lock in which one of our outposts were established and, on the way back, got a good shelling from the German batteries that were trying to locate our artillery positions. We visited these too and, for the first time, I heard the bark of the 240s—a roar, especially when the guns fired in salvos of four, that set my ears ringing.

But these were the only bits of real warfare that I witnessed in that sector. Both officers and men were straining at the leash, so to speak, eager to get out and fight and push their way to the Rhine, but held back, and for excellent reasons, by the High Command.

I saw one or two sham battles, however. One afternoon General Haan asked me to go with him on a tour of inspection, accompanied by his *officier de liaison*, a remarkable major who looked like an Irishman in a French colonial uniform, and by his French aide-de-camp, who had received eighty-



The Village of Soppelle-Bas in German Alsace, Used as Headquarters by a Regiment of American Infantry

The street was camouflaged to prevent observation-balloons from watching movements

IN GERMAN ALSACE

two wounds, the only visible sign of which was a black patch over one eye.

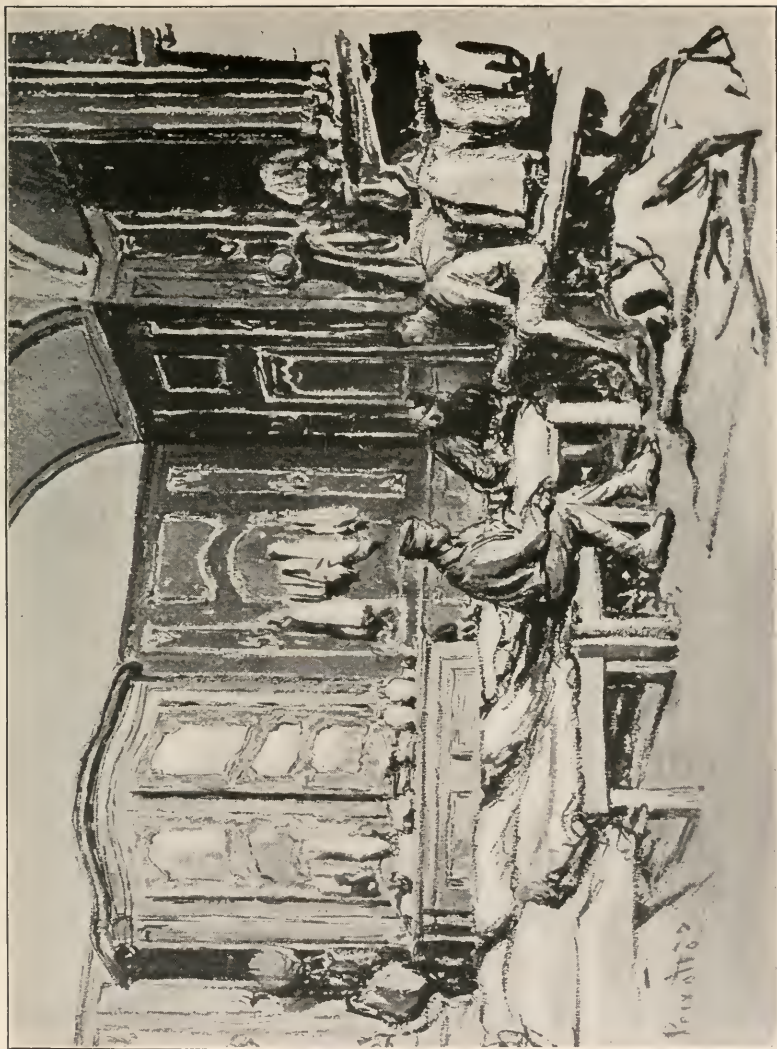
As we drove along, I watched with interest the effect of the two stars on their red field that signalled the general's car. Everybody was "on his toes." The M. P.'s stiffened and gave their smartest salutes; the sentries rattled their guns in their snappiest manner. We stopped in a field near Giromagny to watch an infantry battalion advance under cover of the artillery over a supposed No Man's Land to take a village beyond. The platoons worked their way forward slowly, signalling to each other so as to keep in touch by means of rockets fired from pistols. Every little while they stopped, took what cover they could find, and then went on again. It all looked very quiet and far removed from the dash and clatter of the bayonet charge that the stay-at-home might expect, and yet, when I saw the real thing later, I realized that this was, generally speaking, what modern warfare actually looked like.

Later, quite by myself, I spent a couple of days in exploring the north end of the sector in a side-car, my first experience with a "wife-killer." One day I sketched in and around Massevaux, or Mas-

THE AMERICAN FRONT

munster as the Germans call it, the principal town of the valley of the Doller—a typical Alsatian burg with high-pitched roofs and half-timbered houses, seat of a famous abbey of nuns founded in the eighth century. Just before the French Revolution the abbey, which had become so important that Catherine of Russia was sent to it to be educated, was to be rebuilt and enlarged. An architect from Strasbourg was called in, Kléber by name, the same who afterward became so renowned as a general. The main building that he designed was destroyed by fire, but if it may be judged by the portions that remain, no great artistic loss was suffered, for Kléber would seem to have been a much better soldier than architect.

Up the valley beyond Massevaux the reserve battalions of the 125th Infantry were billeted through little manufacturing villages, Kirchberg, Oberbruch, Dolleren, whose tiny cottages resembled the houses in Noah's Ark, our men towering enormous beside their diminutive doors and windows. On Sunday the people, misshapen, homely, trooped to church, dressed in strange clothes, and those queer bonnets that one sees in certain parts of south-



American Soldiers Billeted in Reception-Room of an Old Benedictine Monastery at Massevaux, in
the Toul Sector



IN GERMAN ALSACE

ern Germany, and their guttural patois, at that period of the war, sounded singularly obnoxious to the ear.

As south Alsace is much more germanophile than the northern end of the province, I was constantly interested in watching the attitude of its inhabitants toward our soldiers. Indifferent they certainly were not, and I thought most of them distinctly surly and ill-tempered, which impression was confirmed by many of our officers. As I bumped along the road beside my driver with his rifle strapped down the handle-bar, I caught, out of the tail of my eye, many a sour glance cast in our direction—the kind of glance that, in the old legends of the country, turned wine to vinegar.

But, as I have said before, this little trip of mine into German Alsace was quite in the nature of an excursion, a glimpse of a charming country in May-time.

But it was my last peaceful experience. The period of preparation of our combat divisions was almost ended. The hour of their active participation in battle was at hand, sooner than any one could have expected. When next I saw the Thirty-Second, it was pushing its way up to Fismes.

THE AMERICAN FRONT

By the time I returned to Neufchâteau, the month of May had almost passed. On Thursday, the 30th, the Germans broke through between Soissons and Reims, and a few days later had fought their way into Château-Thierry, where they had been temporarily halted. Those were dark days—in many ways the darkest of the war. While hoping for the best, every one feared the worst.

III

CHATEAU-THIERRY AND THE MARNE

I

BELLEAU WOOD

CHATEAU-THIERRY had been taken and the Germans were on the Marne again only fifty miles from Paris.

On the 1st of June I was ordered to that city on a special mission. The only other American in the compartment was a colonel, just back from the Philippines, who, having reported at G. H. Q., was now on his way to rejoin his old command, a regiment in the Third Division. At Bar-sur-Aube we found his troops on the move, the station littered with field equipment and crowded with men in khaki.

At Troyes the depot was filled with refugees—the first tide of forlorn-looking derelicts bound they knew not whither. Here ensued a long delay, and after that we made very slow progress. At Romilly the tide of refugees increased, and as our train drew

THE AMERICAN FRONT

in they broke their bounds and literally stormed it, filling with their pitiful bundles every available corner. At Nogent the same sad picture—the platforms a confused and swaying mass of humanity laden with every conceivable object: bedding, bird-cages, clothing, boxes, bags, and household articles piled into baby-carriages. Strings of locomotives from the repair-shops and roundhouses of Château-Thierry were being towed into comparative safety. One felt the Germans very near, as indeed they were, this line being the next one menaced in any new advance.

Now we began to meet troop-trains one after another until the tracks were fairly choked with them, hastening up reinforcements where they were sorely needed. We were due in Paris at 6 P. M., but at that hour were still creeping along many miles from the city. Long stops followed and it was 1 A. M. when we finally reached the suburbs. I was just congratulating myself that the long journey was over when we were shunted off on to a siding.

Suddenly the heavens lit up, streaked with the tall shafts of search-lights. Innumerable new stars

BELLEAU WOOD

and constellations blinked and twinkled in the firmament and the barking voices of the antiaircraft guns told us we were in for an air-raid.

Nearer came the lights. New batteries awoke. Bright flashes streaked the sky and the din grew momentarily louder. Two women in our compartment almost went into hysterics, continually crying, as we tried to reassure them: "*Que voulez-vous; nous sommes des femmes!*" And it was terrifying, out in the open night with only the roof of the car overhead for protection. The din reached its climax; the lights grew dimmer, the barrage more distant, and we thought that all was over. But a new crescendo arose. Again the flashes; again the roar of the guns and the bursting bombs, and again all died away.

It was a long raid—four separate attacks, one after another; then, after nearly two hours' delay, quiet was restored, and at 3 A. M. we pulled into Paris and emerged from the Gare de l'Est into the Stygian darkness of unlighted streets. . . .

When I returned to G. H. Q. a few days later, the first fights in Belleau Wood had already taken place but the wood was not yet entirely cleared.

THE AMERICAN FRONT

So, with two comrades, I set off by motor in that direction. We had a long day's ride via Joinville, St. Dizier, and Vitry-le-François. The road descended the valley of the Marne, following, for the most part, the river itself, which gathers size before your eyes.

Beyond Vitry we entered the bare open reaches of La Champagne, marked here and there with the lonely graves of the brave fellows who fell while trying in vain to stem the first German advance. The road lay straight before us for miles, rolling up and down a monotonous succession of hills one after another.

Though we were well behind the lines, at times the traffic was intense. Chains of camions, making an infernal clatter and din, thundered along at lightning speed, enveloped in sickening clouds of dust. Under the deep hoods their drivers' faces appeared, covered with a whitish mask of limy powder, spread thickest on their eyebrows and beards and in the wrinkles of their foreheads, until they looked like some strange creatures of the Nibelungenlied or men in the legends of the Norsemen.

We passed a big American camp near Sommesous,

BELLEAU WOOD

and beyond that, strings of British aviation lorries and ambulances driven by dusty blond Englishwomen. At Connantre we waited at the railroad-crossing while long trains of Italians went by on their way up toward Châlons or Reims. All the resources of the Allies were being rushed up to parry the next desperate blow.

We reached Montmirail toward evening, and next morning set out for the headquarters of our Second Division, which we learned were in a château not far from Essises. This we found without much trouble, though every precaution had been taken to conceal the importance of the spot.

An M. P. stopped us some distance away and ordered our car parked under the trees. We were then led through the woods and by the shaded walks of the vegetable-garden to a back door of the handsome château, whose main gates remained closed as if the place was uninhabited.

Inside, however, we found it teeming with activity. Orderlies and stenographers filled the billiard-room; the Intelligence and telephones occupied a large drawing-room. The Chief of Staff received us in a smaller salon in which the furniture had been

THE AMERICAN FRONT

pushed back and replaced by a big work-table on horses, upon which were spread large-scale maps concealed by papers.

After questioning us, he sent us up to Brigade Headquarters, where, in an abandoned farm, La Malmaison, beyond Viffort, we found General Sladen. We told the general of our desire to see and make drawings of Château-Thierry—a desire at that time not easy to gratify. He showed us on the map where we might go and sent his aide-de-camp with us as far as regimental headquarters. Here we were supplied with a runner who led us out through the fields and woods to a hill just above Nesles. The town, surrounded as it was with artillery positions, was being shelled and the detonations sounded uncomfortably near. Then as we walked farther on, a sniper's bullet zinged between one of my companions and myself and snapped off a branch of a sapling just beside us.

After that we proceeded very cautiously, finally stepping from the fringe of woods into an orchard.

The ground fell away down to the Marne, and there, directly opposite, only a mile or so away, looking quite peaceful—unbelievably so, in fact—

BELLEAU WOOD

lay Château-Thierry. Rumor had it that the town had been destroyed and burned. Yet every little while, as the sun shone through rifts in the clouds, it lighted up different parts of the city—the warehouses round the depot on the near side of the river, the conspicuous tower of the church of St. Crépin, the emplacement of the old château, and, from this distance, little damage appeared. On the hills beyond the city the Germans lay concealed and every little while a shell would come singing toward us with that strange wabbly noise that we grew to know so well, and would burst behind us over toward Nesles; and every little while a black puff of smoke or a gray one, breaking beyond the city, would show the effectiveness of our reply.

When we had completed our sketches, we turned back, little realizing, in those dark days, that in a short space of time, we should be walking in Château-Thierry's ruined streets.

Next day we set out for Belleau Wood.

After some trouble we found the headquarters of General Harbord's brigade in a deserted farmhouse, La Loge, situated on the main road from Paris to Château-Thierry, a little beyond Montreuil-aux-

THE AMERICAN FRONT

Lions. This was the same brigade that I had visited near Verdun and, up to that time, it had done all the fighting in the Bois de Belleau. From La Loge we went on to Maison Blanche, the headquarters of Colonel Neville's regiment, the Sixth Marines, in which we found the colonel conferring with his second in command and one or two other officers, but he left presently to make a tour of inspection in the wood.

The lieutenant-colonel took us about and showed us the big fresh shell-holes in the orchard and a new hole gaping in the roof. We carefully concealed our car in the woods near by and he gave us a runner to guide us to Belleau Wood, saying, as we parted: "Go as far as you like, but be sure to keep fifty paces apart on the way out."

Thus spaced in single file, we set out through shell-torn fields and bits of woodland where the branches hung limp, snapped off by bullets, and where the narrow paths were choked by fallen trees. Through an opening we could see Lucy-le-Bocage lying off to the left, ruined, desolate, deserted. From this point on, we followed a little ravine or gully that afforded us some protection (for the shells were coming over) and through which the men made

BELLEAU WOOD

their way to and from the wood. Here and there a pile of fresh earth, marked with a bit of paper fastened to a stick and with a steel helmet placed upon it, showed where some poor fellow had paid the ultimate price.

Then we reached a culvert that carried the road from Lucy to Bouresches across the ravine. Under the protection of its stone supports, we found a first-aid dressing-station established, and here we stopped a moment to rest. A few wounded lay about waiting to be sent back. Above my head a great tree had been lopped off by a shell and lay across the gully. The bottom of the ravine itself was littered with débris of every description, with parts of gas-masks, cans, canteens, broken stretchers, rifles, cartridge-belts, and fragments of bloody uniforms ripped from wounded men—sorry relics of suffering.

There were too the articles from their pockets: tobacco-tins, gum, cards, and especially bits of torn letters from home. And as I sat in this scene of anguish, my eye caught these words written on a fragment of paper: “A son such as I have found you to be. God grant that you may be returned to that mother has and will be my constant prayer.”

THE AMERICAN FRONT

An ambulance appeared for a moment on the road above the culvert, loaded its human freight, and turned back again. Stalwart Marines with rifles and packs made their way cautiously through the ravine on their way up to the wood. In the heat of the June afternoon the smell of the clotted blood and the stings of the big gray horse-flies grew unbearable.

We climbed out of the gully and stood for a moment on the open road, looking at the desolation over toward Bouresches, then dropped down into the ravine again, and continued our way until we reached the south end of the Bois de Belleau.

Here, by good fortune, I found Major Sibley's battalion, the very one that I had visited near Hau-diomont. The major greeted us warmly and led us over to his dugout, situated among those of his men in the thick of the woods.

Belleau Wood, now become so famous in American annals of the war, is but a little stretch of woodland, running north and south, scarcely more than a mile in length and half a mile wide. It is composed for the most part of small trees that grow in clusters from a single root and interlock their branches to

BELLEAU WOOD

form thickets so dense that it is with difficulty that one pushes his way through them or sees more than a few yards ahead. Here and there taller trees—birches, beeches, and oaks—tower above this smaller growth, and in certain parts of the wood, especially toward its east front, the ground rises into steep eminences crowned with big gray boulders that form ideal shelters for machine-gun nests.

In this tangled bit of woodland, a veritable fortress, the Germans had securely established themselves in their forward thrust toward Paris, and it was from this stronghold that our gallant Marines had had to drive them.

Seated near his dugout, with the shells whistling overhead and at times snapping off the branches near us, the major told us of the attack, describing how his men fought their way into the wood, wriggled on their bellies through the dense underbrush, and finally charged the machine-gun nests hidden in the rocks and clubbed the gunners over the heads with the butts of their rifles. Lieutenant Noble's company, it seems, was in the thick of it, suffered severely, but behaved like heroes, and their commander was recommended for the D. S. C.

THE AMERICAN FRONT

None of us, I am sure, at that time realized the importance of the engagement nor the place it would take in American history. We only thought of it as the first "real scrap" that our soldiers had been in, and knew that their behavior in it gave most brilliant promise for the future.

There, about us in the wood, were the men who had done the work. And truly a strange picture they made, scattered among the trees, each buried to the shoulders in his sandy dugout, for all the world like prairie-dogs peering from their burrows. Some were busily cleaning their guns, or polishing up their accoutrements; while others were rearranging their kits and brushing their muddy uniforms. Pecking about among them I noticed a small speckled hen—a strange sight, indeed, in such a place—and I asked about her.

"Why, that's Lucy," the major said. And he told us that when his men took Lucy-le-Bocage this little chicken was the only living thing they found there. Though food was very scarce, Lucy's life was spared and she became the battalion mascot, pecking for crumbs with impunity though followed by hundreds of hungry eyes.



A Major's Dugout in Belleau Wood

BELLEAU WOOD

Toward evening the bombardment redoubled in intensity. The colonel returned from his tour of the wood, and we started back with him toward his headquarters. Hostile planes hovered overhead and several times we had to take cover in the edge of the woods. The shells too were falling uncomfortably close. When we reached Maison Blanche again we found that a big one had just burst in the court, wrecking an outhouse and killing a man. Our chauffeur told us that he was in our car when he heard the shell coming. He didn't know how it happened, but when it exploded he was *under* the car. Sand-bags were being piled in the farmhouse windows that were wide open when we left.

When we finally departed quite late in the evening, the colonel's last words to us were specific: "Beat it like hell!" And we did.

We spent a few days more sketching in this Belleau sector, one of them with another battalion of the same regiment that had taken part in the fight but was now in reserve. Then, as there seemed little prospect of any immediate new activity, we returned to our station at Neufchâteau.

II

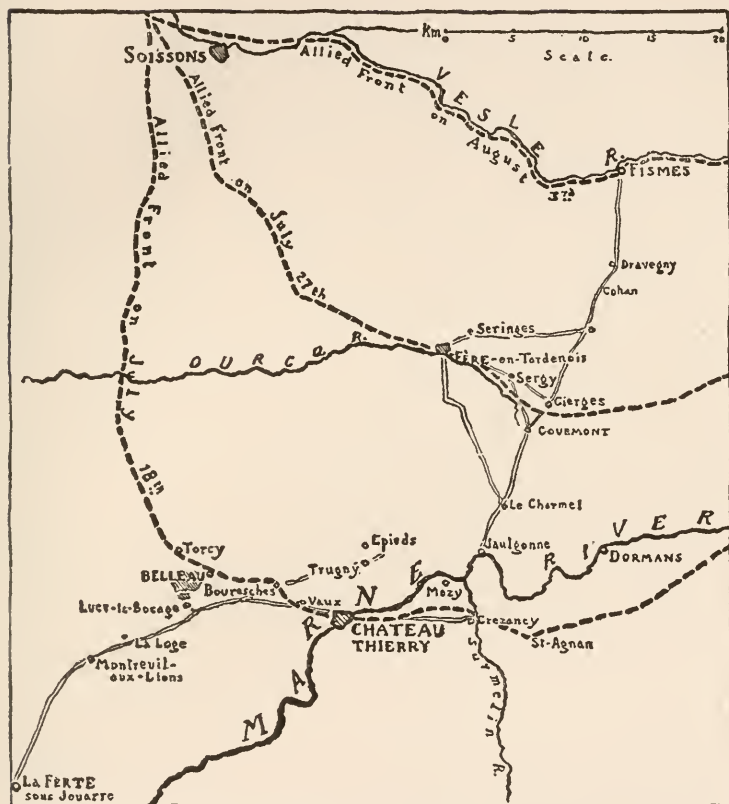
ALONG THE MARNE AND UP TO FISMES

ABOUT a month later, that is, on July 15, the Germans delivered their last desperate blow. This time, however, it fell against a solid wall. At only one important point did that wall break. The French, sorely pressed, yielded along the Marne from Jaulgonne to Chatillon, and the Germans, crossing the river, threatened to pour up the Surmelin Valley and continue their march toward Montmirail and Paris.

But a thorn stuck into their side. Four regiments of Americans belonging to the Third Division still stood firm along the river, stretching from Château-Thierry nearly to Jaulgonne, spoiling their plan and impeding their advance.

Then, on the 18th, Marshal Foch delivered his smashing counter-stroke, and the German retreat

ALONG THE MARNE AND UP TO FISMES



Sketch-map of the Château-Thierry region

began—a retreat that was not to stop until the war ended. Each day thereafter shortened the depth of the Château-Thierry pocket, until, by the 27th

THE AMERICAN FRONT

of July, its southernmost edge lay in front of Fère-en-Tardenois, where, along the heights that dominate the Ourcq, the Germans tried desperately to arrest the Allied advance at least long enough to permit their shattered divisions to retreat. But here again their line was broken, and, by the 3d of August, the pocket was entirely wiped out, and the Americans had reached Fismes on the road between Soissons and Reims.

A few days after this Allied offensive began, I again set out for the Château-Thierry region, by the same road that I had before taken.

This time, however, I headed from Montmirail directly toward the Marne, descending the Surmelin Valley that I have just mentioned. Its westerly side lay in the American area, and khaki was the prevailing color in the villages, but across the valley I could see French regiments moving up, the bright July sunlight glittering on their guns and bayonets and on the long muzzles of the 155s.

As we entered Crezancy, we found it crowded with Americans. It too was the first town that was smashed to bits. Shells had ploughed through its houses like knives through cheese. Disembowelled,

ALONG THE MARNE AND UP TO FISMES

their walls stood tottering. Their red tiles, shaken by terrific concussions, had slid from the roofs and lay in heaps, littering the streets, leaving only the bare beams and rafters, skeleton-like, against the sky.

The church was hopelessly shattered and our men were eating their "slum" in its battered pews. Across the street a Red Cross Ambulance was established, and a large house that our men designated as "The Château" was being used as the headquarters of the Thirty-Eighth Infantry.

Here we stopped for lunch, and it was lucky for us that we did so.

I found myself placed next to the colonel, Ulysses McAlexander, a "regular," now promoted to a generalship. I began to ask him about the battles that had just taken place and he, in answer, began to tell me what his regiment had done on the two first crucial days of the German push. I was, I think, the first outsider he had talked to since those stirring days, and he became quite excited—as excited indeed as I was, for it was a thrilling story to listen to thus at first hand.

Briefly this is what he told me. Four American

THE AMERICAN FRONT

regiments (as I have before stated) defended the Marne from Château-Thierry eastward to Crezancy: the Fourth, Seventh, Thirtieth, and his regiment, the Thirty-Eighth, which held the right of our line with the French adjoining. The main-line tracks of the railway from Paris to Metz and Strasbourg run along the south bank of the Marne, and he was advised to use their embankment as his principal line of defense. This he did, but he also decided to place men all along the river-bank itself in rifle-pits dug among the reeds, and never to let the Germans even set foot on his side of the river. He inquired of the French adjoining about his right flank, and was assured that it was strongly defended and perfectly safe. But here again he determined to take no chances, so had trenches dug *en échelon* up the side of a hill that commanded a wide field of fire *toward the French*.

"I don't know what they thought of me," he said, "but I never asked."

When the Germans delivered their terrific blow, his men along the river stood firm in their rifle-pits and prevented a landing. When the French fell back upon his right, his trenches on the hill became



The Marne at Jaulgonne

This drawing was made from a pontoon bridge constructed of captured German material by the Sixth Engineers. Men of this same regiment are seen beginning to construct a more permanent bridge with the aid of a captured pile-driver. The remains of the old bridge appear in the distance

ALONG THE MARNE AND UP TO FISMES

of paramount importance and enabled him successfully to defend his exposed flank, so that his regiment stuck like a wedge out into the enemy lines, to their eternal discomfiture.

To illustrate his story better, he left the table and returned with some maps and photographs in his hand. Among the maps was one taken from a captured German officer showing the plan of their main attack. All the arrows that marked the line of their intended advance converged toward a bend of the river between Mézy and Jaulgonne with Crezancy as its centre, for Crezancy lies at the mouth of the Surmelin Valley, up which they were to advance.

And it was the wedge of the Thirty-Eighth Infantry that stopped their advance. The air-photos clearly corroborated this, for they showed the German tracks down to the north bank of the river, and on the south bank where a Landwehr regiment succeeded in crossing opposite the Thirtieth, and where other units crossed in to the area occupied by the French. But no tracks could be seen on the south bank in front of Crezancy.

When we had finished lunch, the colonel asked:

THE AMERICAN FRONT

“What are you doing this afternoon?”

“Nothing,” I replied, “except my sketching.”

“Do you want to go over the field with me?” he inquired—and you can guess my reply.

So he called his orderly, picked up his stout cane with a Prussian officer’s black-and-silver sabre-knot twisted round it, and we set off. First we proceeded to the eastward past Moulins and as far as a hill back of Varennes. Here he turned off the road and led us off at a clipping pace through the wheat-fields toward the Moulin Ruiné that had been his P. C.

And there, on the lower slopes of this hill, he showed us the trenches he had dug. Khaki caps and coats and heaps of empty cartridges lay in them. Their field of fire toward the river was wide and open. Some of the dead had already been buried but many had not, and all sorts of things lay in the tall ripe wheat. The July sun was ardent and there was a sickening odor in the air.

As we walked about, the colonel, with his cane, raised the fallen wheat enough to show the direction in which it lay, trampled one way as the Boches advanced and in the opposite direction as they fell back before his murderous fire.

ALONG THE MARNE AND UP TO FISMES

Next he led us down across the railroad embankment to the Marne—here an open quiet-running river, perhaps thirty yards wide—and showed us the rifle-pits dug along its bank. Grenades lay about in quantities, mingled with American equipment, but nothing Boche.

There were new graves here and there, and before one of these the colonel stopped and raised his hand to his cap in salute.

“Do you know who lies here?” he asked. “No? Corporal O’Connor. Corporal O’Connor hid himself here in the reeds and waited until the first boat-load of Germans—men of the famous Sixth Grenadiers—had almost succeeded in getting across, and the man in the bow was just reaching with his grappling-hook to catch the shore. Then he rose from his hiding-place and gave them his grenades full in the face, sinking the boat and killing all its occupants. He also was killed where he stood.”

This spot upon the Marne where the Germans *never* crossed should be hallowed forever by every good American, for here, to my mind, was marked the turning-point of the war.

Continuing our walk along the river, we reached

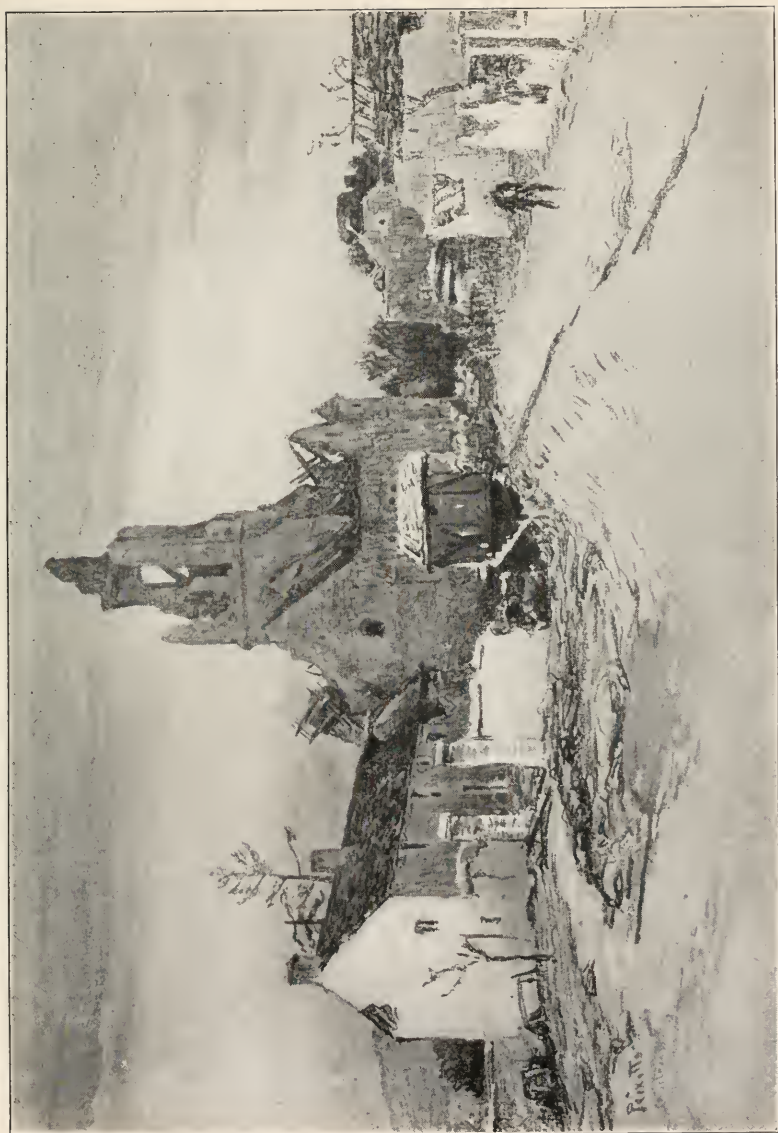
THE AMERICAN FRONT

a point between Mézy and Chartèves where the Germans did succeed in getting across in the area occupied by the Thirtieth Infantry. To our left, Mézy's beautiful old Norman church-tower still reared itself sadly against the sky, surrounded by the shattered remnants of its parishioners' homes. Across the river Chartèves' church lay in ruins, only a fragment of its tower pointing like a thin finger toward heaven, calling for vengeance.

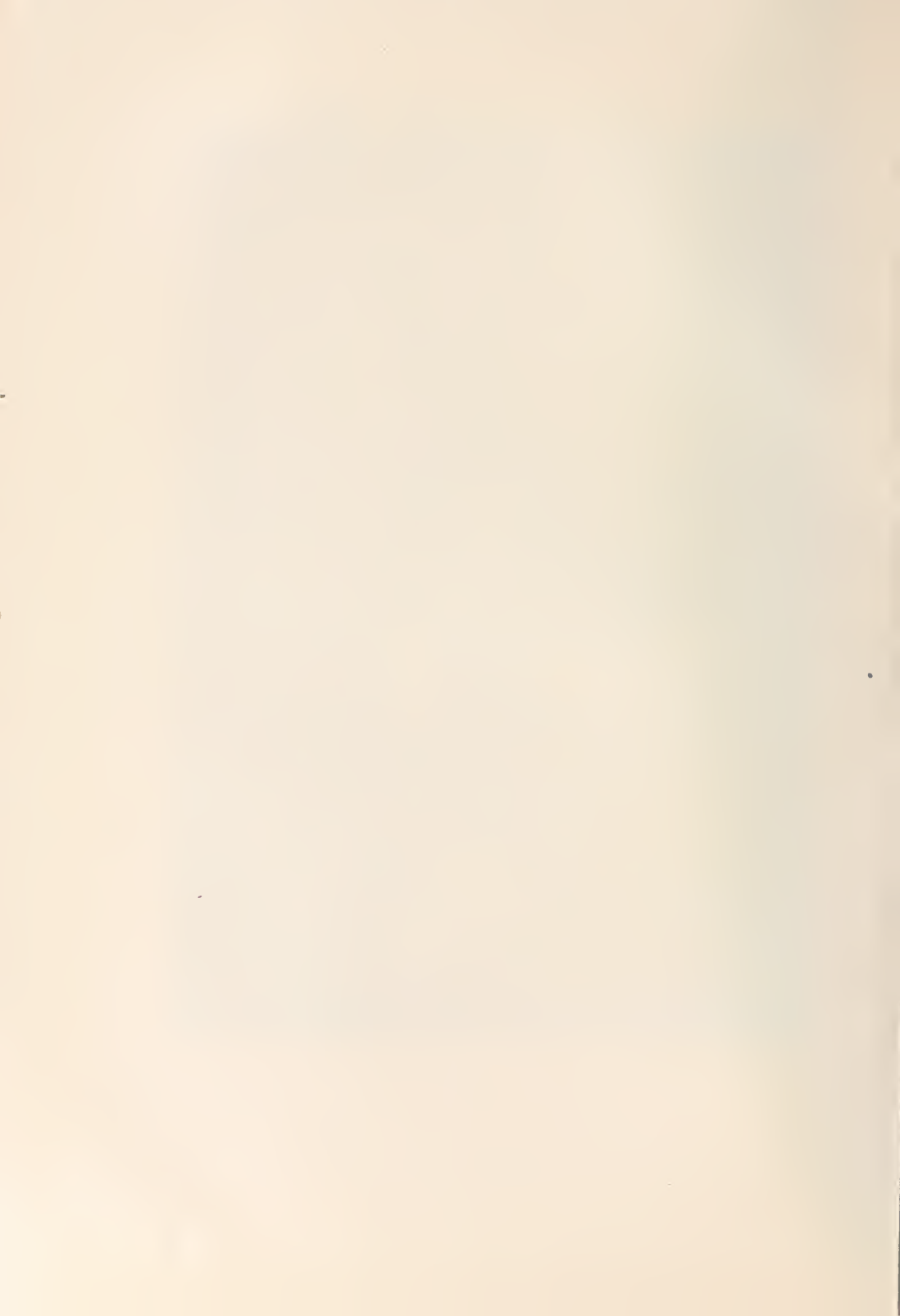
The golden wheat-fields of the Ile-de-France and its rolling hill-slopes covered with gardens and orchards, made, by contrast, these scenes of desolation the more poignant. To the north the rumble of the cannonade sounded like the constant roll of drums.

We left the river and turned back through fields strewn thick with Boche equipment. The ditches were filled with débris and with objects that stank of clotted blood. I picked up a helmet and found it full of matted dark hair. After that I didn't care to investigate nor look for souvenirs. All the Germans that got across were either killed or taken prisoner.

We had now completed our tour of Colonel Mc-



Chartèves



ALONG THE MARNE AND UP TO FISMES

Alexander's sector, so started back toward Crezancy, passing on the way through what had once been the pretty little village of Fossoy. Here we stopped for a moment to look at the church—a sturdy old Romanesque edifice—and the graveyard that adjoined it, a graveyard that had been literally disembowelled. Its graves gaped wide open; its crosses lay prone upon the ground, and in its midst, cause of most of the wreckage, a huge air-bomb had exploded, smashing in the side of the church and digging a vast crater, thirty feet deep, upon whose edge lay poised a fragment of a marble headstone showing only these two ironic words printed upon it: “Regrets Eternels.”

As we passed through the ruins of what had been the village *place*, the colonel drew our attention to an object lying under a cart, hidden away so that nothing might hit against it—an enormous air-torpedo, the largest I have ever seen, that had not exploded. “Don’t you want to take it along as a souvenir?” he asked smilingly, and we as smilingly declined.

Two days later, we came back to this same *place* to sketch and stopped our motor near the cart.

THE AMERICAN FRONT

Looking under it, we noticed that the "dud" was gone. Then a Frenchman, a sergeant of engineers, came rushing toward us, wildly waving his arms above his head and shouting: "*Allez-vous en ; allez-vous en !*" Not realizing what he meant, we hesitated a moment and he fairly yelled, "Boum, boum, boum !" flinging his arms into the air like a madman, then fleeing toward an abri.

Then we understood and shot the car ahead and in under the shelter of a ruined hangar. No sooner had we done so than a terrific explosion rent the air and fairly shook the earth. Broken walls tottered and fell in and a great mass of dirt shot upward as if vomited from the crater of some hidden volcano, falling again mingled with a rain of shell fragments and shrapnel. The famous "dud" had exploded. Its time-fuse had been set by the engineers at 9.35, and at 9.33 we had stopped our motor within fifty feet of where it lay buried in a shell crater !

I spent several days sketching along the Marne, crossing to the north bank by a pontoon bridge "made in Germany," as it was labelled, constructed by one of our engineer units with material captured from the Boches. I visited one by one the chain



Château-Thierry from the Terrace of the Old Château

This drawing was made a few days after the Germans had evacuated the city

ALONG THE MARNE AND UP TO FISMES

of shattered villages along the river that lay within the range of our artillery: Jaulgonne, Mont St. Père, Blesmes, Glands—razed to the ground, every one of them, their buildings so formless that, in the dazzling sunlight, they resembled only the reefs of some coral islands—a “*joli pays*,” as one decrepit old peasant bitterly remarked to me.

For, now that the tide of battle had been pushed back even a little, a few poor old people, having nowhere else to go, were already wandering back, returning to seek their ruined homes, searching among the débris for their scattered possessions, lamenting the disappearance of their household utensils, pointing shudderingly at mattresses soaked with blood. All was chaos and confusion where only a few days before had been order and content.

Château-Thierry itself was by no means hopelessly ruined; had, in fact, only suffered in spots. Many of its streets were quite intact. Others were but a mass of débris. The Church of St. Crépin was filled with plunder, collected by the Germans, ready to be taken but abandoned at the last minute in the hurry of their departure.

THE AMERICAN FRONT

The handsome stone bridge across the Marne had been dynamited and the heavy masonry of two of its arches lay blocking the channel, but already blue-coated engineers were swarming over it like ants restoring a trampled ant-hill. Long, serpent-like columns of khaki-clad troops crawled over the two pontoons to the eastward and clattered along the stone-paved quays into the city on their way northward to reinforce the attack.

I climbed to the site of the old château that Charles Martel, according to tradition, built in the eighth century for good King Thierry. What scenes its gray old walls had witnessed! Taken by the English in the thirteenth century, retaken by Charles the Fifth a half century later, besieged and assaulted again and again, its ruins saw the fierce combats of 1814, when the irresistible soldiers of the Great Napoleon drove off the Prussians and Russians who left twelve hundred dead upon the ground and eighteen hundred prisoners in the hands of the victors. But what imaginative soothsayer would have dared to prophesy that the next time a battle was waged beneath its venerable walls it would be the youth of far America that would again rout the



The Great Bridge Across the Marne at Chateau-Thierry

This bridge was built in 1768, was destroyed by the French in 1918 during their retreat, and is now again open to traffic. This drawing shows its appearance a few days after the German evacuation



ALONG THE MARNE AND UP TO FISMES

Hun and make the name of Château-Thierry forever glorious in the annals of American history !

There it lay beneath me, the silent city, utterly deserted save for the long columns of khaki-clad troops marching ceaselessly along the river. The belfry of St. Bothan and the sturdy tower of St. Crépin still rose intact above the broken roof-tops, while, near at hand, the lantern of the Hôtel de Ville cut its battered silhouette against the sky. A great square of houses that bordered the main street, gutted by air-bombs, were now mere empty shells, scorched and blackened by fire. Beyond the river, the soft green slopes of the Marne hills, covered with woods and wheat-fields and orchards, seemed, by contrast, a mockery to the tragedy of the shattered city.

Off toward the right rose the slopes of Hill 204, that redoubtable stronghold of the enemy, his citadel from which he commanded a view of all the Marne Valley. Later on, I spent an afternoon wandering through its defenses. Rifle-pits and shelters, dug-outs and P. C.'s, excavated deep into the sand under gigantic boulders, honeycombed the ground under its rounded brow, which was ravaged and torn by

THE AMERICAN FRONT

shell-holes and completely denuded of its woods, only a few blackened stumps standing like the last few hairs on a bald head.

The Boches had just left and the pits were full of débris: bedding and mattresses stolen from the ruined villages near by, overcoats and field-gray uniforms, Mauser rifles, bayonets, heaps of "potato-mashers" (as our boys call the Boche hand-grenades) mixed with cigarette boxes, bits of eatables, and the *feldpostbriefs* so plentifully supplied to the German army—all the rubbish, in fact, of a hastily abandoned camp.

From the crest of the hill, where the Paris road turns to descend the other side, I could look down into the village of Vaux, now, alas, but a heap of ruins bordering the highway.

When our gallant Marines had finally cleared the enemy from Belleau Wood, they straightened out their line through Bouresches and, by the end of June, prepared to take Vaux. Not a house in the town escaped the withering artillery-fire that preceded the attack. Every German shelter in the town was sought out and peppered, and when the infantry rushed it on July 1, they even went beyond



Remains of Vaux

This village at the foot of the famous Hill 204 was taken on July 1 in a brilliant attack by the Ninth and Twenty-Third Infantry of the Second Division



ALONG THE MARNE AND UP TO FISMES

and gained a foothold on the lower slopes of Hill 204.

I wanted to appreciate the pleasant sensation of even this small advance, so decided to make a detour, going round by Nogent l'Artaud, so as to reach the Paris road again at a point near Maison Blanche, where Colonel Neville had had his headquarters when I first was in Belleau Wood. His house now stood empty and the roads and woods about it were deserted. We could motor on beyond without even hearing the whistle of a shell, and instead of crawling up through that narrow ravine, could take the open road straight into Lucy-le-Bocage and out over the top of the culvert where the dressing-station had been, to the fields beyond Belleau Wood.

Here too all was quiet and deserted. But among the gray boulders where the machine-guns had been, I found fresh copies of the *Boston Transcript* and the *Springfield Republican* that told me where the New Englanders of the Twenty-Sixth had relieved the Marines of the Second.

The Twenty-Sixth was put in line here early in July, and lay in its hastily dug trenches along the

THE AMERICAN FRONT

east front of the wood, harassed night and day, until the great Allied offensive opened on the 18th. Then, in liaison with the French on its left, it went over the top.

Torcy and Belleau were taken in the first rush, and our men in their eagerness even charged up the slopes of Hill 193 beyond, but had to be recalled to await liaison with the troops on their left. A day or two later they were at it again and this time pushed over the hills of the Marne, on to the plateau of the Orxois and to the slopes that descend to the Ourcq.

They left their traces along their path of victory. The fields in front of Belleau Wood were dotted with lonely graves—sometimes one, sometimes three together, sometimes a group of six. A rude wooden cross marked each grave, with a musket stuck into the ground beside it and a flat khaki-colored helmet hung upon it.

Of the little chain of villages, Bouresches had suffered most. Nothing but ruins surrounded its *place*, in whose centre rose a tree, an oak centuries old, whose vast wide-spreading leafy arms had long shaded the picturesque square. Now it stood a



Ruined Torcy

Torcy lay at the extreme left of the American line in Belleau Wood. It changed hands several times and was finally carried in the victorious advance of July 18

ALONG THE MARNE AND UP TO FISMES

gaunt skeleton, shot to pieces, its branches lopped off, amputated one by one, its trunk riddled and pitted and peppered by bullets and shrapnel.

As I finished a drawing of it, it dawned upon me that it was noon and that I had only had a cup of coffee and a bit of bread for breakfast very early in the morning. There were a few French soldiers in the village and I hailed a sergeant and asked if he knew where I could get something to eat. He led me to a house where six officers were gathered round a table. It was the best room they could find. Its four walls were standing but a shell had torn a big hole in the ceiling, a hole that had been covered with a tarpaulin to keep the rain out. No glass in the windows, of course, and a door that could not close. The table was the ordinary "dining-room table" of the *petite bourgeoisie*, lengthened with its leaves, and covered with a red-and-white checked oilcloth.

The dishes were gathered from the wreckage of a dozen china-closets, but carefully and symmetrically ranged along the table, to which two vases of field flowers added an almost festive note. The food was passed by an *ordonnance*, a hirsute old terri-

THE AMERICAN FRONT

torial of fierce appearance but very gentle manner who performed his service quietly and well.

And as I shared this lengthy luncheon and listened to the unceasing conversation, I could not help thinking of the many American messes that I had attended, where everything was put upon the table at once and the men despatched their hearty meal in a few minutes.

Even the French soldiers made a little function of their meals and tried to rest their weary bodies and tired nerves at table, finding, in the humblest villages, some outhouse or ruin where they could sit down in quiet to eat their "*soupe*." Our boys—God bless them—lined up before the field-kitchens, with their mess-kits in one hand and their canteen cup in the other, received meat and vegetables—their "slum"—in the mess-tin and a half pint of black coffee in the cup; then went off like healthy young animals into a corner to devour their food in silence, growling if any one came near to disturb them! . . .

BEFORE we went up with the troops again, we decided to have a good night's rest, get off our



Village Square in Bourresches

This village lay for a long time in No Man's Land. The great oak that shaded the square was felled by shell-fire and every house in the village was practically destroyed



ALONG THE MARNE AND UP TO FISMES

clothes, and wash up a bit in La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, where we knew of a decent hotel, the nearest one to the present front. We reached it late in the afternoon and succeeded in getting a room—the last one vacant in the house—up under the mansard. Soon after dinner, we retired and were half undressed when I heard some one in the street saying: “There’s a light up there.” Going to the window I saw two people looking up and making signs. Then the dull drone of an aeroplane—the special drone of a Boche motor—reached my ears and the distant explosion of a bomb brought us to our senses. We blew out the candle and stood by the window.

Nearer and nearer came the buzzing motors, so near indeed that, even in the darkness, we felt we could see big black objects moving against the stars, and bang, bang, bang went the bombs as they began to land in the town about us. Should we retreat ignominiously to the cellar? All the house was dark and still and we didn’t know where the cellar was.

Again and again the great black bombing planes circled over the city. Again and again the bombs fell and their explosions rent the air, mingled with

THE AMERICAN FRONT

the sound of broken glass and the crash of crumbling walls. Then the droning grew more distant, then ceased entirely, and a feeling of deep thankfulness came with the silence of the night. Next morning we learned that they had hit nineteen of our men, and that in certain streets near Corps Headquarters not a pane of glass remained. Such was our restful night in La Ferté!

We lingered along the road on our way up to the front next day. For, after we had crossed the Marne, we saw our first big piles of German ammunition cased in wicker-work; we saw their cantonments for man and beast, their abris and *kommandanturs* that had been occupied but a day or two before, and their signs marked every road.

So it was already getting late when we reached the crossroads at Courmont, and overtook our victorious army on its way up north. Here were the guns, the artillerymen bestriding their horses like centaurs, draped in their slickers and casqued with the flat helmet of the soldiers of Cyrus—giving a wonderful impression of youthful calm and manly vigor. Here were the “doughboys” plodding doggedly along after their days of hardship and their

ALONG THE MARNE AND UP TO FISMES

sleepless nights, column after column of them with their packs upon their backs and splashed to the hips with mud, but happy because they were moving and the Boche was "on the run."

Just as darkness settled down, we groped our way into Cierges, where we found a Division Headquarters established in a more or less ruined villa just outside the village. It proved to be the Thirty-Second, the division that I had visited down in German Alsace some months before, and in the busy offices I found several of my old acquaintances.

"A billet? Sure; come along."

And they led us over to the battered village and to the remnant of a house in which several of them slept. There they gave us an empty room, windowless, doorless, with a shattered ceiling that, every time a big truck went rumbling by, shook down upon our heads. We placed a door or two on the stone floor to sleep upon and were fixed for the next few days.

Then we listened to stories of what the Thirty-Second had been doing.

It had, it seemed, relieved the Third Division that had fought its way north from the Marne

THE AMERICAN FRONT

through Chartèves and Jaulgonne as far as Courmont. On the 30th of July the Thirty-Second was in the Grimpette Woods overlooking Cierges. After two days of the bitterest fighting, it drove a wedge through the main German positions to the north of the town and by midnight of the 2d of August had attained Dravegny, five miles farther to the north. On the following day, it made another big push and by four o'clock its patrols looked down into Fismes, the Allies' main objective on the Vesle.

This certainly was remarkable work for a new division. The men were all proud of it and well they might be, for advances of from seven to eight kilometres a day were rare accomplishments in those days.

Next morning General Haan took me out on a hill behind headquarters to show me the terrain about Cierges. To the southward, he pointed out the Grimpette Woods where his infantry lay concealed before the attack. Cierges lies in a pronounced hollow—a mere village dominated by a fine old church-tower. His troops had charged from the woods at dawn across the open fields, and had succeeded in taking the town only to be gassed out of



The Church, Cierges

Cierges was taken by troops of the Thirty-Second Division in the battles along the Ourcq.
A Red Cross flag was hanging from this steeple with a machine-
gun placed in the windows beside it

ALONG THE MARNE AND UP TO FISMES

it again, for the gas was unbearable down in that pocket.

So, seeking whatever cover they could find, they prepared for the more serious work of capturing the hill that lay to the north of the town—Hill 230. On top of this eminence, the general pointed out a farm called Bellevue and a long line of trees that, he told me, screened some quarries that had been made into veritable fortresses studded thick with machine-gun nests.

Two or three footpaths led up this hill, bordered with brambles and shrubbery. Up these paths our men had crawled before dawn, when, at the sound of the whistle, they rose and charged up and over the hill. Hand-to-hand fights in the quarries; fierce combats round the farm. The machine-guns had to be taken one by one, but finally the last of these hornets' nests was silenced and our men moved on over the crest of the hill and dug in before Reddy Farm, another important stronghold overlooking a vast expanse of country to the northward as far as the valley of the Vesle.

Later in the day, I walked up to Bellevue and the quarries. The farm was shot to pieces; the

THE AMERICAN FRONT

quarries filled with kits and knapsacks, with coats and rifles and strings of empty cartridges. The dead still lay unburied in the fierce August sunlight.

Reddy Farm was taken early in the morning of August 1. It had been an important German headquarters, the residence of Prince Eitel Frederick. When I saw it, its walls were peppered with shrapnel and breached with shell-holes, and it had been converted into a field-hospital. But upon the door of the operating-room I still could discern, written in chalk: "Abt. 1. Kasino, General Stab."

The view northward from Reddy Farm is, as I have said, almost without limit. Hill after hill stretches off toward the valley of the Vesle, open, bare, dotted only here and there with patches of woods in the hollows.

As I went farther north, I found, on one of these open slopes, not far from the village of Chamery, the grave of Quentin Roosevelt. He was buried by the Germans where he fell, in a lonely spot marked from afar by a single tall poplar, a conspicuous landmark. Parts of his aeroplane lay upon his grave and a few flowers gathered from the fields had also been placed upon it by our soldiers.



Reddy Farm on Hill 230

Reddy Farm was used by Prince Eitel Frederick as his headquarters. When this drawing was made, on the door to the right of the entrance, giving access to the room marked by the shell-hole, was still written "Abt I. Kasino, General Stab."

This farm is on Hill 230 and commands a view to the Vosges

ALONG THE MARNE AND UP TO FISMES

The German retreat had been so rapid from here on that the villages had suffered but little. Cohan and Dravegny were quite intact. From an old monastery perched on a hilltop farther north we watched the artillery at work. On the hills near us, the shells were bursting, the puffs of smoke seeming to issue from the ground rather than strike into it. Our guns, hidden in woods in the hollows, replied, but never a wreath of smoke revealed their presence. Once in a while, for the fraction of a second, the eye could detect a tongue of flame among the leafage. And in the distance, we could plainly see our shells dropping into "Bocheland" across the River Vesle.

The Americans had reached the Vesle on August 5, after two days of desperate fighting for the town of Fismes, with whose capture the Thirty-Second had fittingly crowned its sensational and spectacular advance. No wonder that General Haan was proud of his division! "At the time of the battles on the Marne," he said to me with his usual quiet modesty, "I told General Pershing that, while my division was not, perhaps, all that I might wish it to be, I felt sure that, if he would give it a chance, it would

THE AMERICAN FRONT

give a good account of itself and could take its place in line for combat work." The Commander-in-Chief took him at his word and events certainly proved that he was right.

Some of my readers will, perhaps, think that I have dwelt unduly upon the deeds of the Thirty-Second. If they happen to be men of the Rainbows, they certainly will, for the Forty-Second also covered itself with glory in those epic fights along the Ourcq.

The Orxois (or country of the Ourcq) is a great plateau, cut by numerous deep little valleys, drained by tiny water-courses, locally called *rus*, swift-flowing rivulets that, in rainy weather, quickly swell the more placid Ourcq. A few patches of woods, sometimes quite extensive, alternate with great open fields that afford no shelter whatever to attacking troops.

It was across such fields that our infantry had to advance to storm the heights of the Ourcq. And it was the Forty-Second that had the hardest part of the work to do, it having just relieved the Twenty-Sixth, that, depleted by the severe fighting at Torcy, in Trugny Wood, and through the Forest of Fère, was in need of rest and reorganization.



Ruined Church at Seringes, Overlooking the Valley of the Ourcq

Seringes changed hands seven times before it was finally taken. It lay at the extreme left of the American line along the Ourcq, being but a mile or two east of Fère-en-Tardenois



ALONG THE MARNE AND UP TO FISMES

So on the Rainbows now devolved the task of taking the Ourcq Valley just east of Fère-en-Tardenois as well as the heights that lie to the north—a terrible task indeed, for every farm in the vicinity was a machine-gun nest and every village a redoubtable stronghold, a veritable fortress, to be won only after the bitterest of hand-to-hand conflicts. Sergy changed hands four times before our troops were finally able to hold it. Seringes was taken, held for forty-eight hours, then lost one night, only to be retaken again next morning.

The story of these fights along the Ourcq will be told by better pens than mine—by the pens of the men who fought them and who saw them. But the towns themselves when I beheld them a few days later, still graphically bore witness to the severity of the fighting. Their streets had not as yet been cleared of débris nor had the shell-holes been filled up. Their houses were gutted; their churches disembowelled by high explosives. A sickening stench of rotting horse-flesh, of unburied dead, was in the air, augmented by the heat of early August. Flies that bred by the million infested the air and stung like poisoned needles; the clouds of dust strangled you on the roads. Those were

THE AMERICAN FRONT

the days when our hospitals were taxed to their utmost capacity; when our doctors and nurses had no rest by day or night.

Fère-en-Tardenois bore the same imprint of desolation as the vassal villages about it. A certain number of its inhabitants, it is true, had remained hidden in their cellars during the bombardment, and were now busily engaged in clearing out their ruined homes where such a thing was possible. German prisoners, closely guarded, were put to work to aid them, and I watched with a certain amount of pleasure one squad of them as they cleaned up the wrecked *Mairie* that still bore upon its front, in letters three feet high, the words: Orts-Kommandantur.

By the beginning of August the Allied line had definitely reached the Vesle, and the Château-Thierry pocket was wiped from the map.

Our divisions, mingled with the French, settled down again to a war of attrition, encouraged, somewhat exhausted, and glad to breathe again after their first big serious offensive effort. So, there being little prospect of any further action on this front, we returned to Neufchâteau.



The Market-Place, Fère-en-Tardenois

Over the tops of the battered houses the rounded slope of Hill 184 can be seen



IV

THE TOUL SECTOR



THE TOUL SECTOR

WHEN writing about our period of preparation, there was one sector occupied by the Americans that I did not describe, the one called the Toul sector.

I omitted it purposely, for it seemed to link itself naturally in my mind, in the light of what happened afterward, with the taking of the St. Mihiel salient.

We used to go to it frequently from Neufchâteau, for it was the most accessible as well as the most active of the sectors held by our troops in the early months of 1918.

Two roads led to it: one straight and direct by way of Colombey-les-Belles, the other via Domremy and Vaucouleurs. The latter road is the prettier and is, besides, of greater historic interest. For Domremy, birthplace of Jeanne d'Arc, lies upon it, only six miles north of Neufchâteau, hidden away in a secluded valley, a sleepy little Lorraine village that strings its humble dwellings and manure piles along the highway.

THE AMERICAN FRONT

The house in which Joan was born stands a little back from the main road, from which it is fenced off by an iron grill. It is shaded by pines and fir-trees and still makes quite a romantic picture with its windows *en croix* and its Gothic niche above the door. You are shown the room in which the maid slept and the window by her bed through which she heard the voices. Adjoining the house is the humble parish church in which she was baptized and afterward repeated her fervent prayers, while, on the hill above, on the site of the Bois Chenu, rises a great modern basilica that offends the eye as well as destroys the simplicity of the place.

Situated as it was upon a highway, in an active sector, Domremy was constantly being visited by soldiers, both French and American; and I have seen (and I confess that a lump arose in my throat as I saw it) French regiments march by it at salute—the officers raising their swords to their chins, then sweeping them outward at arm's length; the men turning their eyes fixedly upon the sacred spot.

Beyond Joan's natal village, the road follows her footsteps as she trudged to Vaucouleurs to see the Sire de Baudricourt, her first friend, the man who

THE TOUL SECTOR

gained her her audience with the King. Enough remains of his town and castle on the hill to show that it must have been a typical stronghold of the Middle Ages when the maid first entered it by the Porte de France, still standing.

Vaucouleurs being, in the spring of 1918, in a rest area, its streets were always full of soldiers, usually Senegalese or *marabouts* or men of the famous Foreign Legion wearing the red fourragère.*

Only a few miles farther north, every village was alive with American soldiers, reserve battalions ready to support in case of an attack and to relieve the tired regiments as they came out of the trenches of the Toul sector.

Toul itself lies farther to the east—a considerable city, of great antiquity, surrounded by massive walls designed by Vauban, above which rise the beautiful twin towers of the cathedral. Its suburbs are, you might say, one vast barracks, for it and

* The origin of the fourragère is, I think, not generally known. A French regiment, sent into action, ran away. The next time it went into combat, a halter was hung round each man's neck with nails attached so that, if he fled, he could be hanged at once. As a result the men were transformed into heroes and the rope—the fourragère—became a badge of distinction. It is now conferred in three colors: those of the *croix de guerre*, the *médaille militaire*, and the Legion of Honor.

THE AMERICAN FRONT

Verdun were the guardians of eastern France, her chief reliance, her bulwarks against Germany, against the first tide of attack, the base of the triangle whose apex was Metz, Germany's greatest fortress.

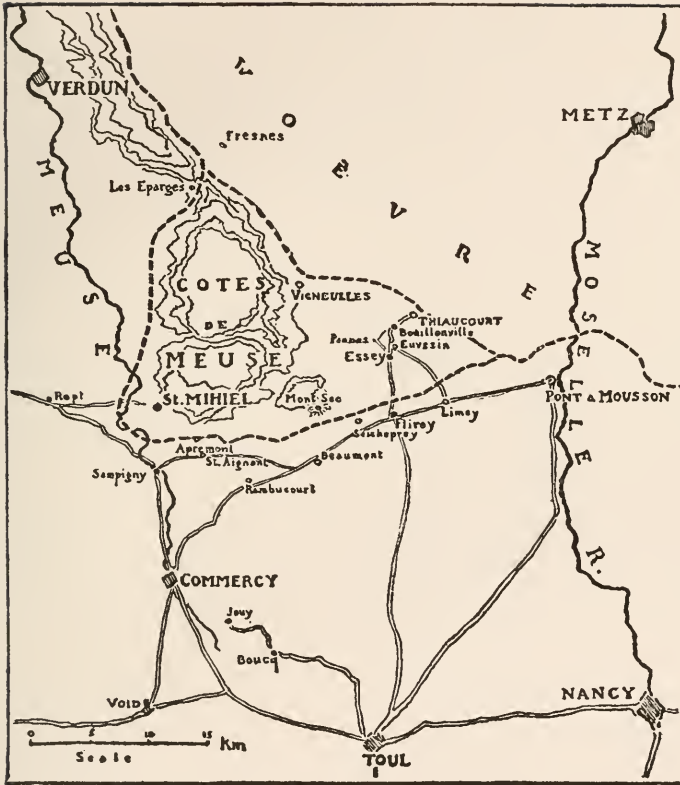
All the way from Toul to Verdun stretch the Côtes or Hauts de Meuse, a regular succession of truncated hills resembling the mesas of our southwest, their gentle slopes rising to flat, platform-like tops that form admirable positions for defense.

From Toul westward, these hills, each crowned with a fort, were held by the French, their last stronghold being Liouville, that guards the valley opening toward Commercy. From this valley north, however, unfortunately for us, the Germans, in their first onslaught, had stormed and taken the Côtes half-way up to Verdun, from the formidable Camp des Romains in front of St. Mihiel to the tragic valley of Les Eparges.

So that on all the western and southern front of the salient, the Germans held the heights that command both the valley of the Meuse and the lowlands of the Woëvre.

The Woëvre is the name given to the great plain that extends northward from Toul as far as the

THE TOUL SECTOR



Sketch-map of the St. Mihiel salient

mining districts of Briey and Longwy. Its soil is thick and heavy, holding the water in wet weather so as to form a slippery, sticky mud as well as

THE AMERICAN FRONT

numerous lakes and ponds. It was in these wet lowlands that our trenches lay, dominated in all their extent by watchful eyes on top of Mont Sec, an isolated mesa, the Germans' main stronghold in the sector, an observation-post that gave them an uninterrupted view up and down our lines.

From the marshy plains of the Woëvre, the Côtes rise gently, cultivated on their lower slopes, with well-kept vineyards that produce the esteemed *vins gris de Lorraine*, the wines of Thiaucourt, in particular holding an honorable place among the *grands crus* of France.

It was on such a hill covered with just such vineyards, about midway between Toul and St. Mihiel, that our Division Headquarters were established in a village called Boucq. I shall never forget my first impression of it. On the way out from Toul, I had been watching the "sausages" that hung intent over the opposing lines and the bursts of shrapnel that broke in the air, and had been listening to the booming of the big guns up toward Verdun. Then, as we turned up the hill toward Boucq, it seemed strange, indeed, to see the peasants working in their vineyards, cutting, pruning, digging, as if they were

THE TOUL SECTOR.

a hundred miles or more from any scene of combat.

Headquarters were in an old château, built in the fifteenth century, but partially remodelled at some much later period. Windows of larger dimensions had been opened into its massive curtain-walls and a few outhouses had been added, but, with its battlements and corner turrets, its low Gothic doorway defended by *machicoulis* above, and its high-pitched roofs, the Château de Boucq still preserved all the essential characteristics of a feudal castle.

We found Major-General Edwards, the commander of the Twenty-Sixth Division that for so long held this sector, in the main *salon* of the ground floor—a very handsome Louis XV apartment, done in white-and-gold, that opened directly on the garden. I have the distinct impression that the general disliked being found in such luxurious surroundings, for he constantly insisted on referring to more active portions of the sector: Dead Man's Curve, Beaumont, Seicheprey, as well as to the fact that, even in the château, they were directly exposed to artillery-fire. When next I saw him he had no need to make excuses for the peacefulness of his surroundings.

THE AMERICAN FRONT

I confess however that the terrace of the château is an idyllic spot. Shaded by parallel rows of clipped trees centuries old, its balustrades overlook a vast stretch of the Woëvre, a view that, on a fine day, seems almost without limit, stretching from Sanzey and Menil-la-Tour on the right, over the Forêt de la Reine to the grassy wastes of No Man's Land and the hated heights of Mont Sec on the left. Were it not for the Adrian barracks under the trees to house the staff and the great camouflage nettings over them to screen them from the air, you would scarcely realize, at most times, that a war was going on.

Not until you looked into those wastes of No Man's Land did you realize, peering through your glasses, that the villages apparently intact when gilded by the setting sun, were in reality mere heaps of crumbling walls, empty shells, skeletons bleaching in a desert.

Our trenches practically followed a portion of the main road that stretches from Commercy to Pont-à-Mousson. The names of the villages along this road—Rambucourt, Xivray, Beaumont, Flirey, and especially Seicheprey, where the Americans

THE TOUL SECTOR

repelled their first attack and received their first baptism of gas—will always recall vivid memories to the men, and they are legion, who have occupied this sector.

I visited in turn each of these towns and under very varying circumstances: first, in the early days when one had practically to crawl about to escape observation; then later, when they were filled with the victorious tide of our First Army as it advanced to take the salient, and, lastly, when they were a billeting area far behind our lines, housing the units that were mending the roads or *en repos*. Beaumont's commanding situation, Seicheprey's desolate surroundings in the wastes of No Man's Land, Flirey's wonderful church-tower, poised miraculously in mid-air with one side entirely shot away—these will remain pictures treasured in the minds of all the men who took part in the historic combats hereabout.

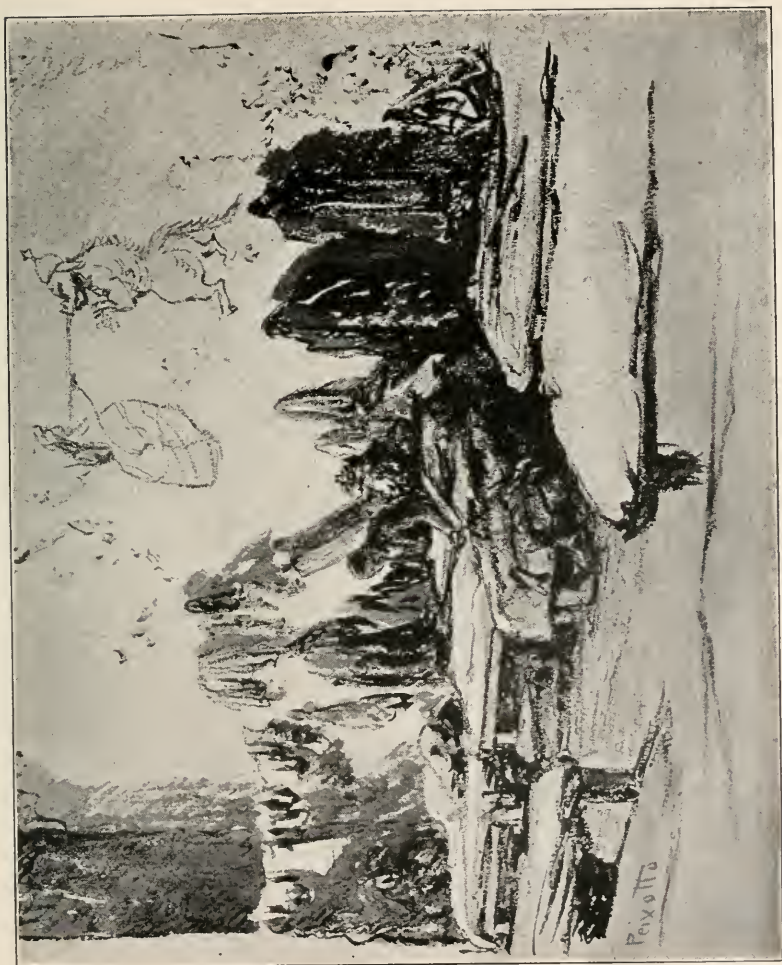
Behind the trenches, we sought out the artillery positions, the "75s" quite near at hand, the "heavies" much farther back in the Forêt de la Reine and along from Minorville to Martincourt. Two proud captains took us one day—Louis Rae-

THE AMERICAN FRONT

mackers, Heath Robinson, Captain Townsend, and me—to sketch their “big babies,” their “240s,” glistening monsters hidden from the prying eyes of aeroplanes in red-earth pits, carefully banked up with sand-bags and covered with broad screens of camouflage netting that broke all shadows and destroyed all contours.

It was principally in this Toul sector also that we sketched the life behind the lines: the big Q. M. dumps at Sanzey and Menil-la-Tour, the auto-chir. hospital near Aulnois, the railheads and engineer dumps near Pagny; the aviation-field near Toul, where we used to visit the trophy-room and see its many souvenirs and drink champagne presented to the young officers by the grateful citizens of the city in recognition of their protection.

And the billets of the sector! The billets in Boucq, in the crowded towns behind Jouy-sous-les-Côtes, in Corneville and Vertuzey, where men from the prim towns of New England bunked in barns with pigs and chickens and in hay-lofts with cooties and rats; the billets in the old Abbey of Rangeval, where some of the soldiers slept in rooms with beautiful Louis XV panelling and others in whitewashed



Billets in a Cell of the Old Monastery of Rangeval

The drawing on the wall depicting France killing the monster was made by a soldier



THE TOUL SECTOR

cells. But whether in whitewashed corridor or panelled hall; in a peasant's barn or a bourgeois' comfortable bedroom, the cheerful optimism of healthy young America always held the upper hand and manifested itself in a thousand jokes and "scraps"; in baseball and in hikes into all the surrounding countrysides. These sane pleasures, added to constant drills and periods spent in the trenches, kept the men occupied and fairly happy.

Such was life in the Toul sector until the month of September came.

Then, suddenly, a feverish activity developed. Something certainly was in the air, a great military secret, but every one was talking about it. New divisions kept arriving until eight had been gathered in the salient—two hundred thousand men. The American army, now an autonomous whole, was to strike its first great blow under its own commanders, under its own Commander-in-Chief, General Pershing. The day that every one had been waiting for had come.



V

TAKING THE ST. MIHIEL SALIENT

I

ABOVE LES EPARGES

ON the evening of September 10 I dined at the Lafayette Club in Neufchâteau with a friend, Frank Sibley, correspondent of one of the leading Boston papers and specially accredited to the Twenty-Sixth, or "Yankee," Division that I have just been writing of in the Toul sector. He had just returned from Paris and was anxious to get back to his New Englanders, who were then stationed up near Verdun. We knew, as I have said, that the stage was set, ready for a big drama, but, having no exact information as to when or where it was to take place, Captain Morgan and I decided to take our friend up to his division and see what we could learn.

We set out by the same road that we had taken when we went to visit the Marines at Haudiomont. But this time, upon reaching Souilly, we turned off toward Récourt, for we heard that Division Head-

THE AMERICAN FRONT

quarters had been moved over to a village called Rupt-en-Woëvre. This information proved correct. When we asked for headquarters, we were told that they were "around the corner in the château." But this time the "château," though the most important house in the squalid village, was nothing more than a vulgar dwelling made of red-and-white glazed bricks, quite different from the ancient Château de Boucq down in the Toul sector. A hallway divided it in half, with a room opening at each side. To the left was the busy office of the Chief of Staff; to the right, that of the commanding general, simple and bare, again a sharp contrast to the elegant Louis XV salon at Boucq.

General Edwards, keen and alert as usual, minus his Sam Browne belt and wearing his two-starred overseas cap poised jauntily on one side of his head, greeted us cordially. "I suppose you'd like to see what we're going to do," he said. "Come over and have a look at the map." And, jumping up, he led us to a table upon which was placed a large relief-map of the region, the hills and valleys carefully modelled in scale with all their contours painted in nature's colors.

ABOVE LES EPARGES

Drawing our attention to the rough country about Les Eparges, with its deep-cut vales and steep hills, he said: "It's a bad country to operate in and we've got a tough job to push down through it, but we'll do it." And then, looking out at the rain that was falling in torrents, he asked: "Is it raining down in Toul?" And, "That's bad," in answer to our affirmative.

And we knew just what he meant. For in the marshy lowlands of the Toul sector the roads get soft and spongy. And down there was the other tooth of the nippers that were to bite into the salient and cut out, as with a surgeon's knife, what the French had always called the "hernia of St. Mihiel," a constant menace to their line, severing the main railway between Paris and Nancy. In February, 1915, they had themselves attempted to cut out this salient, but the terrible tragedies of Les Eparges and Combres had taught them that the price was too great, and they had desisted, never to try again.

"I don't suppose you can give us any idea when this operation is to take place, general," I ventured.

"No," he replied. "All I can say is, 'you are warm.' And I can add, for your information, that

THE AMERICAN FRONT

the best place to be is up in the Grande Tranchée, near O. P. No. 2. To-night, however, you'd better sleep a mile or two back in Genicourt, and get up when the big guns wake you," he added, apparently as an afterthought, and with such an audible chuckle that we thought he was joking.

Before we went back to Genicourt, however, we decided to take a look at the Grande Tranchée and try to find the observation-post that the general had mentioned, so that, if anything did happen, we should know exactly where to go.

Up the valley all was apparently quiet. A few troops were moving over toward Mouilly, and along the edges of the woods, on looking more carefully, we could make out dense crowds of soldiers hidden under the trees, taking a breath of the evening air. We noticed also that a number of big guns, some howitzers on railway-trucks, others long-nosed naval guns, had just been moved up and were standing in the open fields unprotected by camouflage.

The incessant rains had put a coating of oily mud upon the road. Through the Forest of Amblonville it was of the consistency and color of potato soup, for the soil on top of the Côtes is calcareous. And

ABOVE LES EPARGES

I remember a pair of horses that lay in the road still hitched to a wagon that had been smashed to bits by a shell. The poor beasts, in their death-struggle, had rolled over and over, and lay white as clay statues, livid, coated with this sticky mud, through which great pools of blood welled forth.

We hid our car in the woods and walked on to two company posts of the 103d Infantry. There we talked to the officers but could get no further information. But from what they did tell us and the look of things in general down toward St. Remy, we made up our minds that this was the place to be if anything happened.

I slept that night in a ruined house in Genicourt, with my head pillowed on my haversack while the rats gnawed at the straps on its under side. In the small hours of the morning the big guns did wake us (for General Edwards had not been joking), and by dawn we were on our way to the P. C. where we had been the evening before.

The howitzers and naval guns that had been silent were now splitting the air with the clamor of their voices and fairly shaking the earth with their concussions. Farther on, as we entered the woods, the

THE AMERICAN FRONT

“155s,” hidden under the trees, were firing in salvos of four, while up in the Grande Tranchée the crack, crack, crack of the “75s” was uninterrupted, barking and yelping like hounds on the chase. Our big barrage was going over.

But very little was coming back. So, as the road was absolutely deserted, we kept straight on until we struck traffic: ambulances and ammunition-trains going up. We hid our car again and soon had reached the P. C., passed it, and were out in the trenches. Here we were told that the infantry had already gone over the top and were now in the German first-line trenches.

Out in the blasted wastes of No Man's Land, however, where hill succeeded hill, once covered with dense forests, now but shell-torn barrens spotted with a few blackened stumps, nothing was visible but the shell-bursts that kicked up clouds of dirt or broke in dense balls of smoke. The “doughboys,” as had always been the case up to this time, were practically invisible, hidden in shell-holes, in trenches, or under any cover that they could find. For all that we could see “a Corot would have been a better battle-painter than a Horace Vernet,” as

ABOVE LES EPARGES

“Sem” so graphically puts it in his “Pékin sur le Front.”

But soon the wounded began to filter in through the trenches—poor fellows, some walking quite erect with head or hand bound up; others stooping, doubled up with pain and fear, their khaki coats spotted with great brownish stains, their faces and hands bloody. Then came the litter-bearers, staggering through the slippery mud up the hill, steadying themselves by a hand pressed against the trench walls as they bore their heavy burdens—still forms stretched flat, immobile, covered with an O. D. blanket from which protruded a pair of spiked shoes with the toes turned up. When we returned to the regimental P. C. these pathetic figures increased in number, for near it a first-aid dressing-station had just been established. The stretchers lay upon the ground with the doctors stooping over them. The ambulances came up one by one, were filled as fast as the wounds were dressed, and despatched to the rear.

To our left was a division of French Colonials, Senegalese as black as ink. Their wounded were also coming in, and one of the most striking pictures

THE AMERICAN FRONT

I saw that day was one of these negro giants borne like a bronze knight on the shoulders of four prisoners—a group reminiscent of the statues on some mediæval tomb.

By now the prisoners were arriving in squads; then they were brought in by droves. In the first lot I counted no less than a hundred and forty; in the second over a hundred, and still they steadily poured in. Most of them were serious-looking men of middle age, who certainly seemed glad to be through with it, flinging down their helmets with gestures that plainly said: “Thank God, that’s over.” A few were slightly wounded, but the great proportion wore new uniforms, clean, unspotted with mud, showing clearly that they had given up without a struggle; in fact, had dressed to go into captivity. Their sergeants lined them up in double ranks, under the watchful eye of their own lieutenants, while our men looked on with frank curiosity. Then they were questioned by our Intelligence officers and marched off to the rear, shambling off with stooped shoulders under the guard of a few alert and rosy-cheeked young New Englanders.

All day long they continued to pour in, and that

ABOVE LES EPARGES

evening, at Rarécourt, the accommodations provided were so inadequate to the numbers that had come in, that I saw hundreds of them huddled together, crowded into temporary pens, fenced round with barbed wire, passing the night in the drizzling rain—living evidences of our victory.

II

INTO ST. MIHIEL

NEXT morning early, we started out for St. Mihiel to see what had happened down in that direction.

It was the 13th of September, a date forever memorable in American history, and little did we suspect that, by our decision, we were going to assist at the very scene that makes this date historic.

As we approached the city, we found that the only route by which we could reach it was the one that comes in from the west through Rupt-devant-St. Mihiel, an abandoned road in a desert landscape: tall dead grass where once had been rich fields; acres of barbed wire where yellow wheat had sprouted—a country that had been a No Man's Land for four long years. As we approached Chauvencourt, a suburb of St. Mihiel that lies across the Meuse, we found our way blocked. And when we got out we soon saw the reason. A mine had been sprung

INTO ST. MIHIEL

the night before and an enormous hole some twenty feet deep gaped from house to house across the street.

What a strange street it was! For four years Chauvencourt had been lying in No Man's Land with only a German outpost or two among its battered houses. Vines, many of them already blood-red in their autumn tints, had climbed at will over its stone walls, choked up its shuttered windows, closed its doors, and had even woven their tendrils round its chimney-pots. Grass and weeds formed an unbroken carpet over the rough paving-stones of this once busy thoroughfare. All was silent as death, and in this uncanny stillness a strange feeling came over one, as of walking in the streets of some plague-stricken city, of some town in a fairy-tale, cursed and enchanted by the wave of a Merlin's wand.

We emerged from this street upon the banks of the Meuse, river of many memories. There we found a little group of children with French flags in their hands and bits of tricolored ribbon tied in their hair or clothing. French engineers had just succeeded in piecing together a rickety wooden foot-

THE AMERICAN FRONT

bridge, made of doors, window-sashes, and pieces of panelling, leaning for support against the ruined stone bridge adjoining it. Across this unsteady footway these children had come, accompanied by a few women and an old man or two.

They looked curiously at us as we came along. They had never seen our uniforms before. Finally some one exclaimed, "*Mais, ce sont des Américains,*" and they all crowded eagerly about us, anxious to see the first representatives of that far-off nation that had come to their aid and made their deliverance possible.

Fortunately I could talk to them and answer their many questions. I remarked that their children looked well. "Yes, they were good to the children. The soldiers were not so bad, many of them fathers themselves—but the officers! If ever you get hold of a Prussian officer . . ." followed by a savage gesture of hatred and murder. But their stories were not of the kind you read about in books—no lurid "atrocities," no "iron heels," but plain tales of cruel anguish, both mental and physical—the anguish of four long years of waiting with the French lines in plain sight all the time, yet never a word

INTO ST. MIHIEL

from those they held most dear—sons, sweethearts, husbands in the ranks of the armies of France—the anguish of long privations, of insufficient food and heat, and the dearth of warm, clean clothes.

“Four years, monsieur; think of it!” said one elderly dame. “I remember the day they came—a Thursday, the 24th of September, 1914. I was one of the first to see them coming and I cried out, ‘Mon Dieu, here they are, the Prussians,’ and I almost went crazy. Three regiments came in. I can see them yet. They were proud in those days—proud and arrogant. Ah, if I had known that it was going to last four years, I should have died on the spot!”

And one of the men told me that what irritated the Germans most was to be told that every nation in the world, both black and white, was against them. For a long time they laughed at the idea that America could help, saying: “We won’t let them come. Our submarines will sink them all.” But during the late summer they avoided this subject entirely.

Then, suddenly, this same man looked up the river and exclaimed: “Why, the Devil’s Table is gone!” And he pointed to some curious rock

THE AMERICAN FRONT

formations, pinnacles and towers worn by erosion, that rose from the river-bank. On one of these, he said, a large flat rock had always hung poised, a great stone universally known as the Devil's Table. During the last bombardment it must have been knocked off, but its absence had not been noticed from the other side of the river.

"Yes," I said, "the devil has gone and taken his table with him!"

And, in fact, the devil had gone that very night. At sundown on the evening before the townspeople had been ordered to shut themselves in their houses and not to look out again till dawn. They heard sharp orders in the darkness and troops moving in the streets at midnight, and when they looked out in the morning not a Boche was to be seen.

Followed by the curious children, we crossed by the rickety foot-bridge and entered the Place des Halles, a large square at the entrance to the city. Here a *peloton* of cavalry—French Colonials—and a single platoon of infantry were drawn up in a corner surrounded by quite a little crowd of people. These latter were dressed in their best clothes, most of them in well-brushed black, and with an unwonted

INTO ST. MIHIEL

light shining in their thin, pale faces. All were talking animatedly either to the soldiers or to each other—all except two young women with powdered cheeks and painted lips, who stood quite apart, and who, perhaps, were not so glad to see the Germans go.

Here again, in the square, our uniforms attracted much attention. And, as I talked to the poor people, I heard the same sad tales of pain and suffering, of Frenchmen, prisoners, who, from their windows, could see their own troops in their trenches, yet had to wait four years to be delivered.

“Ah, monsieur,” said one of them, “at the beginning of the war, I had three sons in the French army, and never a word of them have I heard since. I dread to have tidings of them now.”

All their provisions had been confiscated and their cellars rifled at the very beginning. Since then, they told me, they had not tasted a drop of wine or beer and had lived on black bread and a little tinned meat. Pulling out her loose clothes from her shrunken body, one of the women said: “Look at me; my own daughter won’t know me.”

The town itself looked quite intact. But each

THE AMERICAN FRONT

house had been systematically pillaged, robbed of everything movable. German signs marked the various Kommandanturs and military offices, and over the door of one café I noticed the words "Offiziers Kasino." Two women were just unlocking its door, and we joined them, curious to see what this Officers' Club would look like. It was but a common café. The mugs still stood upon the tables with the dregs of last night's beer in them; the remains of potato salad were in the bowls, and big muddy footprints on the red-velvet banquettes showed where some one had stepped up to tear the notices from the walls. I noted the prices on the Wein-Karte: eight to twenty marks for Moselle wine; vermouth, curaçao, or "cognac," two marks a glass.

Near the Hôtel de Ville we met, to our surprise, an American aviator wandering about looking for a telephone, which of course he could not find, as none existed. He had been having a royal time, he told us, machine-gunning the retreating Germans up north, at close range, but had finally been forced down by engine trouble. His head-dress and coat attracted much attention from the children and

INTO ST. MIHIEL

we went back to the Place des Halles escorted by quite a crowd, greeted also by gentle smiles from sad faces that peered from behind the window-curtains. French flags, resurrected from heaven knows what hiding-places, now hung out in the streets, and the town was more animated than when we first entered it.

We had crossed the river and were on our way back to our car when, in the silent street of Chauvoncourt, we met and saluted a French general with his two stars soldered to the front of his trench helmet. We had just admired his fine soldierly bearing, when on turning the next corner we stopped astonished.

What was this brilliant group coming toward us?—brilliant indeed for the time and place. It took but a moment for us to guess, for walking at its head were two figures that all of us knew: General Pétain, Commander-in-Chief of the armies of France, and our own great Commander-in-Chief, General Pershing—the Frenchman robust, alert, his field uniform harmonizing well with his iron-gray hair and deep-blue eyes; the American tall, erect, free in his carriage, “every inch a soldier,” and re-

THE AMERICAN FRONT

sponding to our salute—a little surprised perhaps to see us there—with a most gracious “Good morning, gentlemen.”

Behind these two great leaders followed a group of generals, mostly French, as well as a few staff officers, perhaps a score in all. How could we resist? We turned and followed them, for we wanted to witness this truly historic event, the entrance of General Pershing into St. Mihiel. A few weak cheers, but rather an abashed and tearful silence, greeted the generals on the near side of the Meuse; then they picked their way across the rickety bridge in single file and climbed up into the Place des Halles.

The bronzed cavalymen were now drawn up at salute flanked by the platoon of infantry. And that was all the guard of honor that there was. The townspeople formed a compact little black crowd in the centre of the square, and as the generals approached there were cries of “Vive la France! Vive l’Amérique! Vive Pétain!” But no one knew Pershing’s name, and how should they, with all means of information cut off, immured as they had been behind the German lines.

INTO ST. MIHIEL

Pétain, however, effaced himself as much as possible, leaving to the American Commander-in-Chief the homage due him as leader of the troops that had won the victory and delivered the town. So that when an elderly dame advanced, bent and rheumatic, with a bouquet of field-flowers in her hand, it was our general who took it, with all the gracious dignity and courtliness for which he is remarkable, his square shoulders relaxing, his head bending just enough to allow him to say a few words of sympathy and thanks.

Ah, how touching it all was in its simplicity—this little ceremony before a mere handful of people—how different from such a scene as one might imagine it; how far removed from the entrance of victors into a beleaguered city as depicted in the history of the past!

The little party walked on toward the Hôtel de Ville, where there were to be speeches by the mayor and others. But who cares for fine phrases on an occasion such as this? So thinking, we retraced our steps again back toward our motor. Just as we reached it a khaki-colored limousine came up and out of it stepped our Secretary of War, Newton

THE AMERICAN FRONT

Baker, his plain civilian clothes, despite his tricolor headquarters brassard, looking strangely out of place in No Man's Land. With a brisk step, he set out at once toward the city, accompanied only by an American major.

Well, we thought that all was finished, but one more surprise awaited us. For, as our driver was picking his way through the rough spots of the road, a new string of motors came rocking toward us and in the first one I recognized France's Premier, her grand old "Tiger," Clemenceau, eager also to behold the first French city to be liberated from the German yoke after four years of captivity.

III

TO THE HINDENBURG LINE

WE now headed off for the south front of the salient, where the main bulk of the American army was engaged, taking the Commercy road as far as Sampigny, another one of those strange places that had lain so long between the lines, its houses absolutely deserted, with their shutters drawn like closed eyes and woven over with webs of vines and creepers.

Here we turned off on the road to Apremont, crossing a particularly dreary stretch of No Man's Land, a cursed zone where nothing but weeds had grown in four years and whose villages, apparently uninjured at a distance, faded like ghostly phantoms as one approached, resolving themselves into a few broken doorways and crumbling walls. Near St. Aignant we reached the old French trenches. The engineers were just filling them in and had progressed far enough to allow us to go bumping over, so that,

THE AMERICAN FRONT

as we laughingly said, we actually went "over the top in a Dodge."

St. Aignant had been the ultimate French outpost. Apremont, just beyond it, had been German and both towns were perfect networks of defenses: street barricades with wattled revetments and gablons, machine-gun nests, labyrinthine abris and dugouts—all the elaborate system of long-organized resistance. Apremont, because German, was the more novel and, therefore, the more interesting. The entrance to each street from No Man's Land had been mined and blown up, so that great holes, fifteen or more feet deep, filled with rain-water, acted as moats against tanks and surprise attacks. The walls of all the surrounding houses had been reinforced with masonry or cement and were pierced with holes for machine-guns, so that they were veritable fortresses. Behind one façade I discovered a scaffolding, four stories in height, like those made for masons, so that on each platform men could stand with their rifles pointed through loopholes, like the *meurtrières* of mediæval battlements, and command a field of fire down all the streets. These streets were, besides, a wilderness of wire, an inextricable tangle, inter-

TO THE HINDENBURG LINE

spersed with *chevaux de frise* and loose coils whose barbs caught the foot and tripped one at every step.

The road as far as Apremont had been quite free from traffic. But at Bouconville we began to strike the full tide of our advancing army—a tide that for days flowed on, never-ceasing, slow-moving but endless, sometimes congested and dammed for a while, then pushing on again; eating, resting, sleeping, joking, swearing, grumbling as it went, but ceaselessly and stubbornly advancing, oozing up every road it could find, as it followed the “doughboys” that blazed the trail, pushing the Hun back to his main defenses on the Hindenburg line.

We took the first opportunity that presented itself to pay our respects to Mont Sec, that hated hill, whose batteries had dominated our sector for so many months, whose telescopic eyes had watched our every movement. I hope its troglodytic habitations will be preserved for future visitors to see—its Kommandanturs with the Prussian eagle moulded in the cement above their entrances; its dugouts, plastered and papered, with furniture fashioned of twisted boughs, artistic abortions, but made with the patience and care dear to the German heart;

THE AMERICAN FRONT

and its rustic pavilions on the sheltered side of the hill that recalled to my mind many a Turnverein picnic-ground in America.

The crossroad at Flirey was always a busy spot in those days of the St. Mihiel offensive. When I first saw it, the tottering walls of the houses that once surrounded it were still standing, but in a day or two they were gone, pulled down, reduced to broken stone and loaded on trucks by the engineers to repair the roads of No Man's Land.

Oh, those roads of No Man's Land; shall I ever forget them!

From Flirey to Essey was one; from Limey to Euvezin was another. Down one long swale of tangled weeds and wire, over a bit of soft bottom-land, and up the opposite hill. The wheels sinking to the axles; the road, if road it could be called, marked by dead horses, their stiffening legs in the air—poor worn-out beasts that had reached the end of their trail, the final effort of the long, weary haul. Artillery and wagon trains and, later, lines of trucks crawled painfully across these dreary wastes, strangely diminished in size by the immensity of their surroundings, through valleys that had re-

TO THE HINDENBURG LINE

verted to deserts and fields unmarked by any furrow, their noble trees but a few blackened stumps, their villages but piles of stones. . . .

Beyond these empty spaces we found the German lines; then the villages that had been their headquarters. Essey was one of these and an important one. In a protected angle of its church, where apse and transept meet, they had built a P. C., sheltered by the thick stone walls that stood between it and our artillery. And there, in plastered rooms with whitewashed walls and comfortable furniture, the German generals could work and sleep in peace and safety. Just outside this abri a rustic pavilion had been erected where, at a round table, the commander and his staff could eat their meals in the open air. Essey, when I first saw it, had just become one of the Brigade Headquarters of the Forty-Second Division, and its streets were filled with spluttering side-cars and motorcycles, and rattled with the ceaseless streams of wagons and, later, of heavily laden trucks, that rolled over its rough stones with a noise like thunder.

We pushed on beyond it to Pannes—a village that our tanks had just taken and which was still

THE AMERICAN FRONT

the headquarters of the tank corps, whose young officers were full of tales of combat—stories of how their steel beasts had devoured the machine-gun nests in the houses and cleared the town completely of the enemy. From the top of the hill to the north of the village I could see the shells still falling out in the fields toward Beney, and over toward St. Benoit, that our troops had just taken, clouds of smoke from fires and shell-bursts rose lazily into the air.

From Pannes I proceeded as far as Bouillonville, a little place situated in a circular depression just behind our lines. Most of the German dead along the way had not yet been buried and in a quarry on a hilltop I came upon a machine-gun nest that had been put out of action by a single shell. Its four gunners had been caught eating when the shell came over and lay in a heap just where they had been sitting with their black bread and sausage still clasped in their stiff hands.

Bouillonville and the woods behind it back to Euvezin were crowded with the reserve battalions of the Eighty-Ninth, a division that was making a name for itself in this drive. Its trucks were re-



No Man's Land, Near Thiancourt



TO THE HINDENBURG LINE

turning from Thiaucourt, three kilometres ahead, filled with refugees, the civil population of the town being evacuated in view of the bombardment that was sure to follow its capture. I talked to a number of these poor people: nuns with placid faces; elderly men whose shrunken bodies only half filled their Sunday clothes of before the war; women in bonnets with strings tied under their chins, tired-looking and hungry after nights spent in cellars or in tending their peaked children—all of them leaving homes that they knew would now be destroyed, but happy, they said, happy in the thought that at last they were freed from the hated German yoke, freed by these sturdy, clean young boys from far-away America.

One of the men thus told his story:

“At one o’clock in the morning, on the night of September 12th, the bombardment began. At the sound of the first shell we all went down into our cellars. What was going to happen? Several times already we had hoped to be delivered. Several times attacks had taken place but had not produced the desired result. All night we waited, not daring to hope. Then, between eleven o’clock and noon

THE AMERICAN FRONT

on the 13th, the Boches departed, leaving only a few companies to cover their retreat, and these were later taken prisoners.

“The bombardment ceased at about one-thirty. I took a peep out of the cellar and saw the Americans arriving. In a few minutes everybody was in the street to acclaim our Allies. We kissed them, we shook their hands, for it was impossible for us to express to them in words our joy and gratitude. Happily, we knew their uniforms, for we had seen a few prisoners pass—otherwise, we might have mistaken them for a new kind of German or ‘other Bulgarian’! This morning we packed up a few of our belongings, and here we are on our way to safety. Our poor city—what will become of it?”

Later on in that same day, September 13, I learned that the American First Army, acting as an autonomous unit, had attained all its main objectives.

The Twenty-Sixth, that we had seen start out the morning before near Les Eparges, had pushed its way steadily down from the north, and had reached St. Benoit, while the bulk of the army, wheeling on Pont-a-Mousson as a pivot, with the veteran

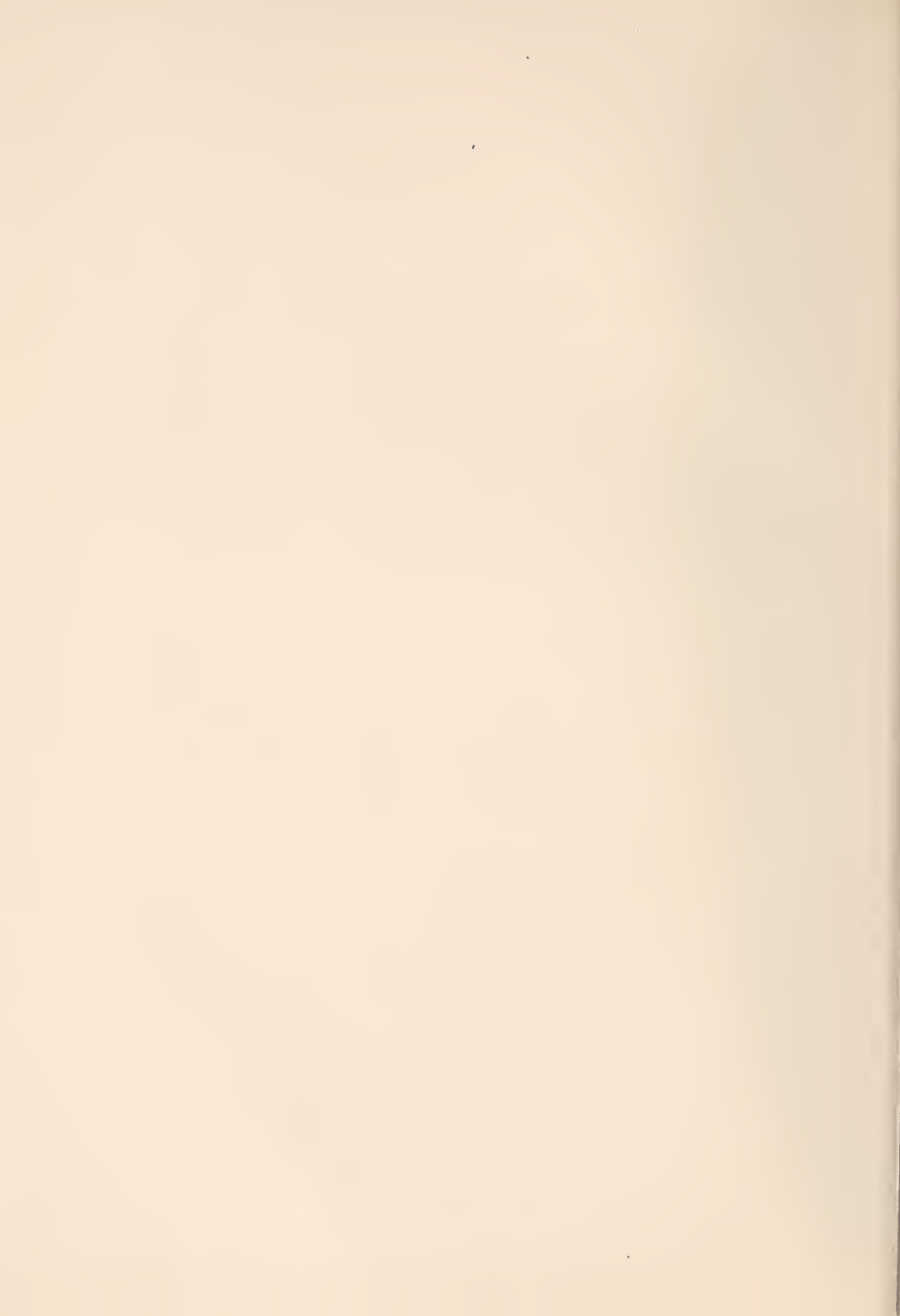
TO THE HINDENBURG LINE

First Division on its extreme left, had advanced from the south. These two main columns had been scheduled to meet in Vigneulles-les-Hattonchâtel, a town perched high on the Côtes de Meuse in the very centre of the salient. It was a race as to which would reach it first. The Twenty-Sixth won, for its patrols entered the town at dawn on the 13th, exactly on time, and when the advance-guard of the First arrived a few hours later, the nippers closed and the St. Mihiel salient was wiped from the war-map forever.



VI

THE GREAT MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE



I

BEFORE MONTFAUCON

DURING the week that followed the taking of the St. Mihiel salient there was much discussion among the officers as to where the next blow of the American army would fall. A large proportion of the men talked of a direct attack on Metz and most of their eyes were turned in that direction.

But on the evening of September 24 we received a direct "tip" from General Headquarters to the effect that, if we went up somewhere northwest of Verdun, we "would be likely to see something interesting." That was quite enough.

Soon after lunch we set out, three of us, for Bar-le-Duc, where we had a conference with our chief from G. H. Q., who had moved up there that day and who suggested that we go on as far as Clermont-en-Argonne, a town situated about ten kilometres behind the front line. We arrived there toward

THE AMERICAN FRONT

seven in the evening but found only a regimental headquarters. The colonel, however, was very helpful. He explained that even from the hill behind Clermont, a conspicuous landmark and a noted O. P., that was bombarded every night, little could be seen of any actual engagement. But he advised us to find one of his captains, Norcross by name, over near Dombasle—a man who knew every foot of the country and could direct us just where to go. So we set out to find him.

Twilight of late September was now deepening into dusk, and this dusk soon became a total darkness, utterly opaque, black as ink, unlit, in the early night, by any moon or star, for a foggy curtain hung low over the land. So, not daring to show the sign of a light, we had to creep along very slowly. Sometimes a great camion would go crashing by and sometimes a string of them. At the crossroads silent M. P.'s stood to direct traffic and prevent collisions. We finally reached Dombasle and took the first turn to the right as directed, following a deserted road up a long hill, but could discover no trace of Captain Norcross.

Not a being was in sight and a brooding mystery

BEFORE MONTFAUCON



Sketch-map of the Argonne offensive

THE AMERICAN FRONT

had settled down upon these black wildernesses of bleak landscape—an uncanny feeling enhanced by the fact that we now knew perfectly well that within a very few hours hell would be let loose and everything would be on the move.

Down a hill and we found ourselves in Brabant; then, most unexpectedly, back on the very same road from Clermont to Dombasle that we had just been following, for, in the darkness, we had made a complete circle. Near Récicourt we spotted the headquarters of the Thirty-Seventh Division in some dugouts by the roadside. Opening, then shutting a door, and raising a blanket that hung so as to obliterate any stray beam of light that might escape, an orderly led us into the adjutant's office. Here a few officers sat poring over maps or talking quietly in corners where the dim candle-light threw huge grotesque shadows upon the wall.

With the information we gathered there we set out to make one more attempt to find our captain, and a little later did locate him in a hollow below Brocourt. He advised us to go on to Montzéville, saying that the big guns round where he was would deafen us when they woke up, while up at Montzé-

BEFORE MONTFAUCON

ville we would be beyond the heavy artillery as well as nearer the scene of action.

So in the Stygian darkness we set out once more. It was now ten-thirty. We must again have taken a wrong turning, for suddenly we found ourselves in Sivry-la-Perche. But an M. P. set us right and we started off toward Béthelaincourt. The cannon were now beginning to wake the echoes and star-shells and rockets appeared toward the north. By this time we were very close to the front lines and we knew that at any moment anything might happen. One more wrong turning and we might land in "Bocheland"!

No further mishap befell us, however, and when we reached Montzéville we sought out a shelter in which to pass the remainder of the night. All that we could find was the duck-walk leading into an abri where the doctors were getting what rest they could before the strenuous work of the morrow.

At twelve-fifteen the artillery "preparation" began. Flashes like those of some prodigious electric storm swept the horizon. The booming of the distant guns, becoming less and less intermittent, rolled at last into one continuous roar. Just before

THE AMERICAN FRONT

three o'clock the air was split by violent concussions. A battery of 155s in the very next room, so to speak, suddenly woke to action; some naval guns "around the corner" rocked the ground with the force of an earthquake.

The great barrage had begun.

The nearer crashes were answered by more distant rumblings up and down the line until the roll of the guns came fast as a drum-beat and each beat was the voice of a cannon! In sudden lurid flashes the ruined houses of Montzévile leaped out of the night, lit as if by lightning strokes, then, as instantly, faded into darkness. Bursts of pale-green balls arose, signalling to the artillery. Few shells were "coming over." Once in a while a dull thud and some one would call out "Gas!" But, for the most part, the Boche was in his dugout, hiding from our withering fire.

As the first wan streaks of dawn began to pale the sky Montzévile appeared razed to the ground, and I found myself in a muddy roadway that once had been a village street—now nothing but ruts and puddles and shell-holes edged with a few battered walls. The ambulances began to move, and

BEFORE MONTFAUCON

toward five o'clock up went the balloons, slow, clumsy, like huge bloated worms, climbing skyward with their observers in their baskets, ready to watch the effect of our barrage.

Terrific as it had been, the roar of the guns redoubled. Five-twenty-five was the zero hour. Never, we are told, in the history of the world, was such a barrage put over as on that morning of September 26. In the short American sector alone, four thousand guns were speaking, and the men were officially notified that this was no mere local offensive but "one grand push from the North Sea to the Vosges."

And I thought of the effort and of the sacrifice that it represented; of the women depriving themselves at home to make it possible; of the sweating men who had forged the steel; the miners, the stevedores, the stokers at hot furnaces braving the U-boats; the engineers and all the men scattered across France that had pushed these men and guns to the front. . . .

As dawn broke, we moved on up to Esnes, directly under the southern slope of Hill 304, that hill of tragic memories. Its denuded flanks, scenes

THE AMERICAN FRONT

of such bloody combats, rose bleak and barren, bereft of all vegetation, behind the ruined town that lay in the valley wrapped in a bluish haze. To the eye alone all seemed peaceful enough. No clouds of battle-smoke rose high in air or hung low in the hollows; no cavalry went dashing by mounted on neighing steeds; no flags, no bands of music. Nothing to see but mud and dirt and troops, troops everywhere, plodding ever forward, struggling wearily on.

But to the ear the war was a terrible reality, a terrific fact, for the noise was so deafening that it seemed as if one's ear-drums would burst. Short, fat howitzers, long 120s, thin-nosed as greyhounds, 220s, all mouth, vomiting their big shells high into the air, hidden in the ruined houses of the village or banked in tiers up the hillslopes, belched and barked and thundered.

Keyed up with all this din and excitement, I climbed among these guns toward the top of the hill. Cannons above me fired and recoiled; others below shot their hissing shells up over my head; red tongues of flame, like those of a blast furnace, leaped for an instant from the muzzles followed by wisps of bluish smoke.

BEFORE MONTFAUCON

When I reached the summit of the hill, all beyond lay wrapped in an impenetrable mist. The men had stepped out of the trenches but were momentarily expecting a counter-barrage. Then we were all ordered off the crest of the hill and I returned to Esnes, where the wounded and prisoners were already beginning to filter in. The first Boche to arrive was a scared-looking youth of nineteen, who was quickly hustled off in a side-car to be questioned. Then they began to arrive in groups, but not in any such numbers as at the beginning of the St. Mihiel attack—a sure proof that this was no “walk-over,” and that the resistance was stiff.

Later in the morning I again climbed Hill 304, and this time was able to go on over its crest until I could look out toward the hills and valleys that lie beyond. It was a wonderful spectacle that lay spread before me, and, fascinated, I spent the remainder of the day wandering about, sketching and watching it.

The bare hilltop on which I stood commanded an almost unbroken view over a vast stretch of country quite devoid of any cover, absolutely denuded of trees or any growing thing, but pitted with shell-holes and fragments of wrecked trenches, the ground

THE AMERICAN FRONT

falling abruptly away down into a valley where lay the ruined village of Malancourt. To the right spread the bleak expanse of Le Mort-Homme, ravaged and desolate—a place whose memories are as tragic as its name. To the left, however, some large patches of woods remained where the Bois de Malancourt joined the Bois de Montfaucon that lay beyond; while in the centre of this vast panorama, perched on its lofty hill about four miles away, rose Montfaucon itself, the proud eagle's nest from which the Kaiser watched the battles about Verdun.

When I first arrived upon the scene, the Germans were still in the Bois de Malancourt, and Malancourt itself was just being “mopped up.” A French battery of 75s was taking up position in a field near by, and I joined its officers, who had a powerful pair of glasses mounted on a tripod, so that, when the battery opened fire, we could watch its shells burst in the woods, where the rat-tat-tat of the enemy machine-guns was uninterrupted.

Then, as the day wore on and the Bois de Malancourt was cleaned up, I could see, with beating heart, our troops emerge from these woods and start across

BEFORE MONTFAUCON

the open to attack the Bois de Montfaucon beyond. Little khaki-colored toys they looked like, scattered out in open formation, just as I had seen them months before down in Alsace, training for a day like this, disappearing under the cover of any depression or shrubbery that they could find, then reappearing at the sound of a whistle, half-rising or crawling on ahead.

And then a thrill went up my spine as I saw the tanks come out, strange lumbering creatures, crawling one after another, Indian file, rocking like ships in a heavy sea, but steadily creeping forward on their caterpillar feet toward the machine-gun nests hidden in the woods, that are their special prey. Shells with a lurid, saffron-colored smoke—the new antitank explosive—began to burst over them, and I could plainly see the hail of molten lead that shot directly downward from the ball of ruddy smoke.

While the battery of guns beside me kept up its infernal din, regular, sharp, deafening as the beats of giant sledge-hammers on an anvil, every once in a while a prodigious roar and rattling would pass overhead as a huge shell from the guns behind us cleft the air. As its shrill whistling died away a

THE AMERICAN FRONT

moment later, a cloud of salmon-colored smoke mingled with débris and stones arose from the hill of Montfaucon opposite, drifting away finally on the afternoon breeze. The "big boy" had done his work.

The day was filled with incidents. At one time I found myself talking with Captain Homer St. Gaudens, whom I had not seen since I discussed camouflage with him nearly a year before up in the Cornish Hills and who was wounded in the head only fifteen minutes after he left me. At another time my attention was attracted by the rare sight of a French colonel, whose blue uniform was conspicuous among so much khaki, and I watched the progress of our troops with him and heard his praise of them. He proved to be the Chief of Staff of General Gouraud's army, and with him was his liaison officer, Major Bryan, who afterward gave me a remarkable series of photographs of the most important sectors of the American Front—pictures that I treasure highly as precious documents of the war.

After months of peering through periscopes or peeping furtively over trench parapets, it seemed

BEFORE MONTFAUCON

strange indeed to stand thus in the open and watch even a fraction—though it was an important one—of the greatest offensive in history.

As the afternoon wore on I could see our infantry, supported by the tanks, work its way, despite the machine-guns, across the open spaces and finally penetrate into the Montfaucon Woods beyond, while, far over to the right, in front of Béthincourt and Le Mort-Homme, other regiments could be seen advancing—mere tiny specks. Quite near at hand, coming up over the crest of the hill on which I stood, our field-artillery was being brought up to support our advance. Under the wheels of guns and caissons the engineers were shovelling loose stone and ballast to keep the precious pieces from miring. Behind the artillery followed the ammunition-trains and the quartermaster's vans filled with supplies—all the pressure of men and transport attacking in the open, converging from all sides upon Montfaucon, their main objective in this sector, the whole forming a panoramic picture we had never been able to see before in this war.

II

THE ROAD TO VARENNES

NEXT day we decided to go over into another sector and see what was happening on the road to Varennes.

As far as Neuville we had no difficulty, finding the roads quite free from traffic. Neuville itself tempted us to linger, for it was very picturesque. Its ancient houses are, for the most part, of half-timbered construction, the spaces between the beams being filled in with plaster and mud spread on heavy laths. The concussions of the various bombardments had blown all this mud-filling out, so that only the timber-work was left to support the red-tiled roofs that remained fairly intact though the walls that held them up were open to the four winds of heaven.

In these airy billets, through which the cold autumn breezes swept at will, our men were quartered,

THE ROAD TO VARENNES

gathered, with their animals, round fireplaces still intact but practically out-of-doors.

A mile or two beyond Neuville we struck the traffic, a jam such as I had never seen before, the road for miles being blocked with a triple line of vehicles of every description. I saw colonels and even a brigadier-general on foot in the road, acting as "traffic cops," directing, swearing, "bawling out" every officer in sight, but the blockade never budged.

It was a very serious matter, too, for the ammunition couldn't get through to feed the guns up front nor could the wounded be brought back to the hospitals, while at any moment the enemy might open up his batteries on the congested road and do fearful execution. A regiment of negro engineers was hard at work strengthening the road, and as we sat in these serious surroundings that might at any moment become positively calamitous, the lilt of darky voices was ever in our ears, and this is what I heard come floating in the window:

"Slow! Ah should say he was slow; he's as slow as a snail! You know 'bout de woman what had a sick husband and nobody to send for a doctor?

THE AMERICAN FRONT

Well, she thought o' the snail an' she sent him off an' she waited for fo' year an' nobody came. So she went out to see what on earth had happened to de snail. She found him by the garden-gate, 'bout half-way to the road, an' she said: 'You ole lazy animal! Don't you know mah husband's sick an' dat I'se waited fo' years fo' de doctor? Get up an' hustle, you ole lazy thing; is this all the far you got?' An' de snail he looks up an' says: 'If you don't quit your talkin', ah won't go at all!'"

Finally, like the old woman, tired of waiting, we got out and went ahead on foot. Then we found the principal reason for the congestion in the road: a gigantic mine crater, more than a hundred and fifty feet long and forty wide, that completely cut the road in two. A new roadway was being made around it, but the artillery, in spite of straining horses and sweating men, was mired in it and could not be extricated, for the weather having changed the night before, the rain had softened the earth and made it spongy and slippery.

Fields of wire, shell-holes filled with water, quagmires, rank grass, and a few blasted trees—these were the objects that composed the tragic landscape

THE ROAD TO VARENNES

across which, by muddy side-roads, like ants toward an ant-hill, crept long lines of horse-drawn vehicles, diminutive, almost lost in the vastness of the desert waste. Off to the east rose the sinister slopes of the Vauquois, denuded, stripped of their forests, ravaged and ploughed up by shells and high explosives, with the old French and German first-line trenches running almost side by side up and over their summit. To the westward the heights of the Argonne, rocky and precipitous, succeeded each other, hill after hill, from the southern horizon to the northern, green and densely wooded, save for the portion that had lain so long between the enemy lines—the portion where the trees had been reaped as with a giant sickle, only the stumps standing like the stubble in a wheat-field.

In the woods to the north, dense and apparently so peaceful, the sharp voices of the machine-guns were incessant, plainly marking the area where our men were trying to clean out the treacherous forest. I watched some German prisoners dig a grave and bury one of their comrades on a hillslope while a sergeant read a simple prayer.

Then I picked my way through the traffic on the

THE AMERICAN FRONT

road until I reached the bridge before Boureuilles which the engineers had just finished repairing. As the result of incessant effort, the road had been cleared enough to permit the ambulances to come through filled with our wounded, quiet, courageous, after hours of waiting and exposure, some sitting up, others lying prone, motionless, with only a hand or foot, stained with blood, protruding from the army blanket that covered them.

Boureuilles itself was razed to the ground and honeycombed with wrecked trenches, destroyed by our barrage and just abandoned by the enemy. Some of our tanks were still crawling about it, moving farther up over the narrow-gauge tracks that afforded them better support than the roadway.

Only two kilometres beyond Boureuilles lies Varennes, the old town in which Louis XVI, after he was recognized in Ste. Menehould by the dragoon Drouet, was arrested as he was attempting to escape into Germany, and taken back to Paris to be tried. Now the ancient place was smashed to bits. The fine old stone dwellings on its main street were but piles of broken rock; at a carrefour, a Virgin still

THE ROAD TO VARENNES

stood in a blue niche, but the chapel that she belonged to had completely disappeared.

In a square some forty or fifty of our tanks were gathered, multicolored in their gaudy camouflage, wallowing around in the sticky mud, half hidden under the mangled trees that, clipped and prim, had once shaded the pretty *place*. Our troops had just taken the town and had moved on a bit beyond it, but it was teeming with activity. The unburied dead lay in the streets. The dressing-stations were crowded and groups of prisoners kept filtering through on their way to the rear. The roar of the artillery was very close and sharp, and the rattle of the musketry and of the machine-guns over in the forest where the Seventy-Seventh was trying to dislodge the Boche was incessant and insistent.

After its initial push forward, our Argonne offensive moved slowly, for it encountered the bitterest opposition. One hard fight succeeded another. Through one cold night after another our infantry camped in the open, wet and freezing, sheltered only by their pup-tents and exposed to a continuous harassing fire from the enemy's artillery. Slow and steady progress was being made, to be sure, but only

THE AMERICAN FRONT

by "paying the price," for we were up against the main Hindenburg positions defended by picked and veteran troops.

At the end of the first few days we went back to Rarécourt, where our First Army Corps had its headquarters, and I found shelter in a deserted room behind the Graves Registration Bureau (a cheerful neighborhood), a chamber devoid of any furnishings but containing a placard with a broken door from which various articles of feminine apparel—sordid dresses and hats trimmed with bedraggled feathers—insisted on emerging at most unexpected intervals. In this cheerful place I set up my cot (which, as the fine season was now over, I was beginning to use), and made myself as comfortable as the fireless fireplace and leaky ceiling would permit.

And from Rarécourt I proceeded to make my various sketching trips. Rain and slush; mud and dirt; my paper wet and soggy, my hands numb with cold—these were the conditions, none too propitious for sketching, that obtained in the Argonne in October.

I spent a couple of soaking days in and around



Great Shell-Hole near Cierges

This shell-hole, measuring about fifty feet in diameter, was in the middle of a German ammunition dump

THE ROAD TO VARENNES

Montfaucon, drawing the remains of the formidable German defenses. From the slits of the P. C.'s I looked out over the grim wastes of Hill 304 and Le Mort-Homme and saw the same tragic landscapes that the Kaiser and his son must have seen as they watched the heroic defense of Verdun. I ploughed through the mud that was ankle-deep in the old German trenches. Heavy clouds, thickly charged with moisture, drove low over the lofty hilltop and swept the ruined arches of the martyred church with their misty filaments. The clipped trees of the Place de l'Eglise, once neatly trimmed and umbrageous, now stood like charred skeletons, reaching out their bony arms, leafless and branchless, in gestures of mute despair and ardent supplication.

On other days, with Captain Duncan, I explored the woods and deep recesses round Very and Cheppy, veritable fortresses captured only after epic combats by the men of the Thirty-Fifth, who, under their baptism of fire, succeeded in driving the veteran Second Guard Division of Berlin from these strongholds.

Later, we pushed on as far as Cierges and Briulles-

THE AMERICAN FRONT

sur-Meuse, also scenes of fierce fighting, and up the valley of the Aire, following the slow progress of our troops as far as Apremont, Chatel-Chehery, and Exermont. But farther it was impossible to go, for, for a long time, that is until October 20, the advance of our army was checked along this line by the obstinate defense of the main German positions in the Argonne, the pivotal hinge upon which the safety of their entire line depended, the vital spot that must be defended to the very last. And when under our pressure it did break, their whole line crumbled and the war was at an end.

III

THE ARMISTICE AND SEDAN

LATE in October the "flu" laid me low, and at the end of the month I was sent down to Fontainebleau for a period of rest and convalescence. And that is why I was in Paris and not at the front for the signing of the armistice. At the time I regretted that this was the case, but now I am glad that I lived through those two wonderful days in Paris.

I came up to the city on Sunday, the 10th, fully realizing what was going to happen. The boulevards were thronged with a great calm crowd. I took a seat in the afternoon on the *terrasse* of the Café de la Paix. At the tables about me were officers of every one of the allied nations: French, American and English, Portuguese, Canadians and Australians; Serbs, Belgians, Poles, and Italians. The civilians were dressed for the most part in black or sombre colors but not in mourning. Venders

THE AMERICAN FRONT

with push-carts filled with flags were doing a thriving business, but there was otherwise no outward sign of excitement.

The Place de la Concorde presented a more stirring spectacle. Coysevox' horses and figures that stand at the entrance to the Tuileries Gardens and the Champs Elysées, precious works of art that had been protected by sand-bags during the bombardments, were now further embellished with strings of Boche helmets that hung over them arranged in symmetrical designs. The terraces that overlook the Place were lined with captured planes of every type and description—Fokkers, Rumplers and other Taubes, and the big black Gothas and bombing-planes that had terrorized Paris at night for so long a period. Around the obelisk and the fountains that decorate the centre of the square, big guns of all calibers, trophies of the last offensives, pointed their grim noses toward heaven, encircled by armies of smaller pieces—37s, 77s, trench-mortars and *minenwerfers*—over which the children were climbing and sporting. A dense crowd packed the square, gazing with evident satisfaction at these varied trophies, and especially at the captured tank,

THE ARMISTICE AND SEDAN

decorated with its Iron Cross, that stood at the entrance to the Tuileries Gardens. The statues of Lille and Strasbourg, so long in mourning, were now gayly decorated with flags and wreaths.

On the following morning, Monday, the 11th of November, I stepped out on a balcony near the Arc de Triomphe and beheld the city lying spread beneath me, its familiar domes and towers—the Panthéon, the Invalides, Notre Dame, Sacré Cœur—plainly visible though enveloped in a bluish mist. In a hospital yard just below some wounded soldiers were playing at ten-pins. Otherwise there was no sign of war, and the streets were as quiet as they had been during the last few weeks.

The morning paper brought no definite news. A little later I went down-town and to the office of my department in the Rue Ste. Anne. There I was told that the armistice had been signed at 5 A. M. and was to take effect at eleven. I looked at my watch. It stood at eleven-ten. The war was over!

When I went out into the street again, the news was just leaking out. An American officer was placing flags on Fremiet's statue of Jeanne d'Arc that stands before the Red Cross Headquarters in the

THE AMERICAN FRONT

Rue de Rivoli; the Place de la Concorde, centre of all Paris excitements, was fast filling with a joyful crowd and with students singing before the statue of Strasbourg. In the Rue Royale, flags, held in readiness, were appearing at every window as if by magic.

We took a table for luncheon by the window of a restaurant fronting on this street. Next to us sat six French officers watching the growing crowds as intently as we were. A troop of *chasseurs d'Afrique* came up the street mounted on Arab horses—"du Fromentin," as one of the French officers expressed it—looking exceedingly picturesque in their pale-blue tunics and red fezes, with their captain saluting at their head and bowing to the acclamations of the people. Grizzled veterans, in battered helmets and uniforms faded by years of campaigning, were singled out of the crowds, hoisted on youthful shoulders and, *drapeau en tête*, borne careering down the boulevard. Others seized the smaller cannon from the Place de la Concorde and, cheering, pushed them through the crowd.

American motors and camions, filled with dough-boys clinging on like bees in a swarm, came roaring

THE ARMISTICE AND SEDAN

down the street, back-firing with a noise like giant *mitrailleuses*. The crowds grew ever denser and soldiers, soldiers were everywhere. I distinctly remember one group: an Australian, a "Tommy," a French sailor, a Yank, and an Italian, arm in arm, each carrying the flag of his own country, an inspiring sight, a living picture of "The Allies." Factory girls and *midinettes* mixed freely with the men and were hoisted bodily upon the motor-trucks that now were wreathed with swathes of bunting, not draped with care, but thrown loosely round the unwieldy vehicles piled high with soldiers, the top-most man holding a big flag aloft, that the breeze held stiff and taut. Then some Australians came down the boulevard headed by their band.

Ah, the music, that was what was needed—what we wanted! But there was little of it and little cheering—and no brazen noises like those we make at home. Underlying the joy that the long nightmare was over, I distinctly felt an undercurrent of sadness, pain at the thought of all the dear ones who were gone forever and could not be there to share the hour of rejoicing; vivid recollections of years of anguish that could not be dimmed even in

THE AMERICAN FRONT

this, their hour of triumph. And when, as I saw on several occasions, a group of wounded came along—*grands blessés* from the Paris hospitals, armless, legless, or sightless—the crowd opened reverently and silently, and with respect made passage for them to pass.

We made our way up the jammed boulevard and stepped out upon the balcony of a big office that we know that fronts on the Place de l'Opéra. The brown-gold trees, the gray houses, and the Opéra itself, with Carpeaux's Dance hidden behind sandbags covered with war posters, served as a background to a solid mass of humanity, black for the most part, but thickly sprinkled with spots of blue and khaki, jostling, joking, good-humoredly pushing, seething up from the Metro like ants from an ant-hill. Motors, ambulances, and buses slowly and painfully pushed their way through, but the crowd that, grudgingly, opened to afford them passage, closed behind them again like a river behind a moving barge.

Then, suddenly, we heard a mighty humming in the air and a great Handley-Page came sailing majestically overhead. In an instant a clamor arose

THE ARMISTICE AND SEDAN

and the whole place turned pink as every face in the crowd was turned upward to watch the great bird fly magnificently across the sky. . . .

ON the day following the signing of the armistice, I returned to General Headquarters, where I found that the joy attending this great event was not as great as might have been expected, and for reasons easy to guess.

Anxious to visit and sketch the scenes connected with the last combats of the war, I set out a few days later with Captain André Smith for Clermont-en-Argonne and thence to Varennes. From this point we followed up the valley of the Aire, this time passing through Château Chehery, and on to Fléville and St. Juvin, that we had been unable to reach before. All these places had suffered severely in the recent fighting, as the Americans had slowly pushed up on one side of the Argonne while the French pushed up on the other, squeezing the Boche and his machine-guns out of the depths of the forest, and aiming to effect their junction at Grandpré, a considerable town situated at the extreme north end of the Argonne Forest.

THE AMERICAN FRONT

As we approached Grandpré, the deadly effects of our fierce barrage as well as the accuracy of its aim were everywhere apparent. The fields at each side of the road were pockmarked with shell-holes often so close together that they overlapped, yet the road itself was almost uninjured, spared to allow our advancing columns to utilize it.

The outskirts of the town were smashed to pieces, where the Germans had put up their main defense. But in the place where our camions were standing the houses were less injured and the conspicuous church spire rose intact above them.

When we asked for a billet we were told to choose anything that we could find, so picked out an airy chamber with three good walls, doorless and partly roofless in the Kronprinzstrasse, for all the streets still bore their German names. The wind was sharp and chill; the air damp and cold. We went to mess at the "château," an ugly modern villa of some pretention, and found our officers gathered there for supper in the open (there being no room in the house), their only shelter a tarpaulin under which the wind howled and whistled at will.

We all gulped down our meal as quickly as pos-

THE ARMISTICE AND SEDAN

sible, for the food chilled in an instant. Opposite me sat a French civilian who, they told me, had arrived that afternoon to dig up some money and valuables that had been buried in the garden when the villa was abandoned four years before. When this man found that I could speak French (none of the other officers had happened to be able to do so) he fairly exploded, all his pent-up feelings bursting forth in a perfect torrent of words.

He was, it seemed, the owner of this Villa Marguerite, and this was his first visit to it since he left it in 1914. It had meanwhile been an important German Headquarters and, though battered by the recent bombardment, was in fairly good condition. The Boches had systematically robbed it of everything, even including most of the furniture, "modern stuff," its proprietor remarked rather disdainfully, "but," he added gleefully, "they left two splendid ancient *armoires*, treasures that I specially prized, the only really valuable pieces of furniture that I possessed. *Ah, vraiment, ils n'ont aucun goût, ces Boches!*"

After supper, as we were sitting round the hot stove in the dismantled living-room, trying to warm

THE AMERICAN FRONT

our chilled bones, one of the officers asked him if he would like to see the *abri* that the Germans had dug in his garden. "*Ah, oui,*" indeed he would, and, excited again, he was led down into the cellar where a crowd of negro pioneers were huddled round a stove. As we passed the broken door of the wine-cellar which the Germans had cleaned up years before, he said, with a sigh, "If only my cellar were as it once was, I could warm you with some of the best wine in France."

A door opening from a dark corner led us into a passage about eighty feet long, neatly boxed in with planks, and this passage was prolonged by another even longer, running at right angles to it, and then by a third about fifty feet long. This last terminated in a lofty underground chamber, faced up with brick, some twelve feet square and about thirty feet high, roofed, they told us, with six feet of concrete. Niches were arranged in its walls for cots and certainly, in them, even under the heaviest bombardments, officers could sleep in peace and safety.

As we opened the door into it, six big negroes sprang to their feet. The table before them was absolutely empty; a single candle showed only their

THE ARMISTICE AND SEDAN

rolling eyes and glistening teeth and their hands raised to their foreheads in salute. "Craps," said the officers. A lieutenant, without a word, seized the candle, snuffed it, put it in his pocket, and we left the culprits to grope their way back in the darkness.

Our host was evidently delighted with this underground chamber, with this latest addition to his property. "What a souvenir of the war!" he cried, "What will my wife say when I show it to her—and my friends?" And later he remarked reflectively, "I'm glad the Americans gave me back my home. I am very grateful and shall always cherish their souvenir. This afternoon I found the graves of two of your men down by the little stream below my house. I shall always care for them as if they were the graves of my own sons; they shall never lack for flowers."

When we returned to our airy billet it was freezing, and when we looked out in the early morning the streets were coated with thick ice and the wheel-tracks glistened like bands of polished steel. A biting north wind added to the discomfort and chilled the hot cakes at breakfast before we could get them

THE AMERICAN FRONT

into our mouths. It was the first real touch of winter and the negro troops looked as unhappy as they doubtless felt, stamping their feet and slapping their sides in their efforts to keep up a circulation.

Our purpose that day was to go as far north as we could and see the extreme limit attained by our troops—the culmination of their superhuman efforts in the Argonne—and reach, if possible, Sedan, the historic place that had spelled “defeat” to the French in 1870 and “victory” in 1918.

We had read in the papers that the Americans had taken Sedan the day before the armistice was signed, so expected, of course, to find it filled with our soldiery. By the map we had only forty-five kilometres to go. So we took it leisurely at first, stopping in Buzancy to sketch the crossroad that had been such an important centre behind the German lines, and that still was marked with all its great sign-boards.

Thence we proceeded by a lonely road through the Forest of Dieulet, that had figured so prominently in the latest communiqués, and that was torn and lacerated by shell-fire. At La Besace we made a detour through the icy streets to avoid an enormous



The Crossroads, Buzancy

THE ARMISTICE AND SEDAN

mine-crater that blocked the road. Tenaciously we kept on, despite a road furrowed by the heavy traffic of the retreating Germans, then frozen by the biting north wind, until we reached Raucourt, where a regiment of French Colonials were marching through the town—the first troops we had seen since leaving Buzancy.

From Raucourt we followed down a pretty little valley that led toward the Meuse. White flags were nailed to the church-towers and to the tall factory chimneys. The villagers who had remained in their homes during the long German occupation came to their doorways as they heard the sound of our motor, and watched us curiously as we went by. But the road itself was absolutely deserted, except that, here and there, we met a family group pushing a baby-carriage or a small cart filled with their scant belongings, as they returned to homes that had been abandoned years before. Beyond Remilly's picturesque church, we could look down into the Meuse Valley. But at the bottom of the hill, where the road we had been following joins the main highway that skirts the river, a huge chasm yawned before us, another mine-crater whose explosion had shat-

THE AMERICAN FRONT

tered all the houses round about and splashed their ruined walls with cuts and bruises made by flying fragments of molten lead. A French engineer pointed out a detour through the fields, and, after some difficulty, we found ourselves on the main road along the river.

From here on our progress was very slow. Every few hundred yards a mine-crater would block us and we had to look for a way around. The telegraph wires were down and at times got tangled in our wheels; the poles lay in the road. But we managed to keep on, even getting by the dynamited railway-crossing at Pont Maugis. Across the river lay Bazeilles and Balan, and beyond them we could now plainly see our goal, Sedan.

But just beyond Wadelincourt, as the road enters the suburbs of the city, we came to a last railroad crossing, and here an obdurate French sentinel halted us. We showed him our papers, but he said that absolutely no one was allowed to pass and, in reply to a question, informed us, to our great surprise, that no troops, either French or American, had yet entered the city.

For further information he referred us to his

THE ARMISTICE AND SEDAN

captain. So we returned to Wadelincourt and the captain said that we must see his colonel, who was over in Frénois.

The road over there, which was little more than a field path, led up and over the heights that lie to the south of Sedan, heights that command a vast panorama. We stopped on the summit to contemplate this view, so full of tragic memories. It is of course the city that first fixes the attention, its massive citadel and big public buildings standing out prominently from the compact mass of its houses. It lies in a cup-like valley, backed by the first wooded heights of the Ardennes, and it was in this valley that the French Emperor with his whole army was trapped and captured at the end of the battle that virtually closed the war of 1870. Toward the east, La Moncelle and Daigny mark the positions of the French right wing, while Illy and Iges mark its centre and left. The Germans had crossed the Meuse at Donchery to the west, and had occupied these very heights of Frénois, from which their artillery commanded the city and the rear of Napoleon's army. The French defended themselves heroically. But when the Saxons and Prussians effected a junc-

THE AMERICAN FRONT

tion at Illy and closed the ring of iron round the French, there was no help for it, and the Emperor and his army, outgeneralled and hopelessly outnumbered, were obliged to surrender. Napoleon III handed his sword to the King of Prussia down in the Château de Bellevue at the foot of the hill, caught at least like a man at the head of his army—not sneaking like a culprit into neutral territory!

Such, for the French, are the tragic memories that cluster round Sedan. That is why its name has been a synonym for defeat and revenge; that is why such importance was attached to its capture in this war.

Just how history will eventually record this capture, I cannot say. Several versions already exist in the American army; other versions are current among the French. The sentry's information that no troops had yet entered it, though it had been "captured" about a week before, was indeed surprising.

So it was with some curiosity that I sought out the colonel who, it seemed, alone had the power to allow us to enter the city. I found him in a modest

THE ARMISTICE AND SEDAN

peasant's house in the little village of Frénois, busily dictating orders in a back room. He seemed surprised to see me and at first, I know, was going to refuse my request, but when I had explained to him our special mission, he wrote in his own hand, down in the corner of my orders, an "authorization to enter Sedan."

Armed with this, we returned toward the city, though by a different road from the one by which we had first approached it. A sentry posted at the railroad crossing stopped us again and, doubting the validity of our pass, called his sergeant, who, in turn, called his lieutenant and he, recognizing his colonel's signature, gave an order, the road gates opened, and we started down a tree-shaded avenue toward the city.

The faubourg was hung with flags—not flags such as one might ordinarily see, but pathetic flags that had lain hidden in cellar or garret for years, mingled with others of a home-made variety, French flags, stitched together clandestinely in back rooms with reds and blues of varying intensity, British flags of strange design and, most touching of all to me, American flags, presumably copied from photographs,

THE AMERICAN FRONT

for their starry fields were out of all proportion and their red stripes were very often black.

Crossing the river and the island, we entered the Place de Turenne and drew up beside the statue of the great Marshal of France, a native of the town. The square was quiet and almost deserted. A few people came to look at us and our big motor curiously and one elderly man, in well-brushed but antiquated clothes, raising his watery eyes to mine, asked pathetically: "When are the French coming in? We need them. We have neither heat nor food."

A long line of abandoned cannons were ranged before the two big buildings that had been, one a Soldatenheim, the other an Officers' Club, during the German occupation. At one end of the square stood the Hôtel de Ville and, adjoining it, at the bridge-head, the German generals had established their Kommandantur.

We went to the City Hall to ask for a room in which to open our cots, but were told by the Commissaire de Police in person that we should need no bedding rolls that night. And forthwith we were taken over to an imposing house not far away and

THE ARMISTICE AND SEDAN

given two large connecting rooms on the ground floor, facing a little square, through which, we were told, the French troops would pass on the morrow.

For it seemed that the French were to enter the city at daybreak.

When Sedan was directly threatened by the Americans, the Germans agreed to surrender the city intact provided they were allowed to withdraw unmolested. This they had done about a week ago and, the armistice intervening, no other troops had as yet entered the city, which had lain meanwhile in a sort of neutral territory. The people were without coal and almost without food. Luckily we had brought a few canned things with us and these we shared in the kitchen of the house (the only room that could boast even a trace of heat) with the woman who kept it, she providing some camomile tea, whose warmth was comforting and grateful.

Her story was an unusual one. She had come up from Paris at the beginning of the war to see her husband, who was mobilized near Sedan, and she had been caught there by the tide of advancing Germans. It was found out that she had kept a hotel in Paris, so she was ordered to organize

THE AMERICAN FRONT

and direct this rooming-house for officers, in return for which service she had been treated with a certain amount of consideration, though her tribulations had been many. Up to the last few weeks the officers had seemed happy enough. Then the communiqués had very evidently been tampered with and then they ceased altogether. In the hallways she heard loud words and altercations and the soldiers saying to their officers, "We won't go any further; the war's over for us." Then the commanding general came to take up his residence in her house, his quarters by the bridge-head being untenable, as the mined bridge might be blown up at any moment. He sat most of the time with his head in his hands, silent and dejected. Then came the sound of distant shots that steadily grew nearer. Then a day of anguish. Then calm again; and presently the hated Germans packed up their kits and departed, leaving the town to its civilian population.

Before daybreak, on the morning following my arrival in Sedan, that is on Sunday, the 17th of November, I was awakened by a sound I had been listening for even in my sleep: the clatter of horses' hoofs on the paving-stones, and, looking out, I could

THE ARMISTICE AND SEDAN

see dim shapes moving along, the *éclaireurs* or cavalry patrols that precede advancing troops, the only things clearly visible being the sparks struck by the horses' shoes and the matinal cigarettes that twinkled in the men's mouths.

The advance-guard came through about a half-hour later, and by that time I was standing with the crowd in the Place de Turenne. For here the townspeople had gathered, excited, expectant, to watch wistfully for the division that was to follow, waiting to see once more the beloved faces of the *poilus*, the uniforms of Frenchmen, after so many months of having the arrogant Prussian striding through their town.

And as we stood there together I heard the same sort of stories that I had heard before at St. Mihiel: the same tales of mute suffering, of the haughty, overbearing officers; of girls ordered to report at certain places at midnight; of underfed men obliged to work overtime at hard labor. And when I asked them where they got their food and clothing, "Why, from America," was their reply, for they had duly received their share of America's generosity for the inhabitants of the invaded regions.

At eight o'clock an aviator came swooping over

THE AMERICAN FRONT

the Place “doing stunts,” flying so low that he almost touched the roof-tops, then circling round again and attempting to calculate the distance even closer.

The cheers that greeted him had scarcely died away when we heard the sound of music—the stirring notes of the “Sambre et Meuse,” that march of all marches appropriate to the time and place, and at the far end of the bridge could see a solid column of horizon-blue. Nearer and nearer came the music, more and more distinct the clear voices of the bugles. A thrill went through the crowd. Tears welled to their eyelids and their faded faces were absolutely transfigured, as they saw again, after all their years of suffering, their own brave soldiers, victors at last after four years of heroic struggles.

The band swung by. Behind it rode the general of the division—the gallant Sixty-First of Gouraud’s famous Fourth Army—in his field uniform, but wearing his parade cap encircled with its double bands of golden oak leaves. As his horse’s hoofs left the bridge and touched for the first time the paving-stones of the historic city, his hand went

THE ARMISTICE AND SEDAN

up to his *képi* but, instead of saluting, he lifted it from his head with a broad and handsome gesture and swung it out at full arm's length, holding it thus as he rode bareheaded through the cheering crowd and on through the streets of the city as far as I could see.

Tramp, tramp, tramp, behind him, came the rhythmic cadence of the marching feet—the regiments passing in close formation. No parade step; no glittering new uniforms. Only the faded coats and the battered steel helmets; the marching kits and the heavy packs and the guns held high and tipped with their murderous bayonets. Regiment succeeded regiment, each followed by its field and combat train and by the batteries of *soixante-quinzes*, an army on the march, businesslike and grim, still intent on the pursuit of a retiring foe.

Finally the rattle of the last field-kitchen died away and silence settled again over the delivered city. The people looked at each other, exchanged a few words and faded away into their homes. A young French officer turned to me and said: “You Americans have certainly added a glorious page to your history in the taking of Sedan.”

VII

WITH THE ARMY OF OCCUPATION

I

INTO LUXEMBOURG

THERE seemed but one more important thing for me to do in connection with my work for the War Department, and that was to follow our Army of Occupation to the Rhine.

But before doing this I decided to motor from Sedan back by way of the valley of the Meuse through another region that had been an important American sector during the last days of the war. At Dunsur-Meuse we stopped to say good-by to some friends in the Forty-Second, that was just preparing to move up toward Germany as well as to sketch the picturesque old fortress-town that lay half along the river and the Canal de l'Est and half perched high above, clustered round an ancient church, that, a conspicuous landmark far and wide, tops a steep isolated hill.

Crowds of prisoners returning from Germany were passing through the town: Russians, Eng-

THE AMERICAN FRONT

lish, Italians, French. Some were trudging painfully along, tired, weak, and hungry; others had been picked up by our trucks and were being whirled they knew not whither, but little did it seem to matter to them so long as they were headed toward France. They were dressed for the most part in tatters—some in the uniforms that they had worn when captured; others in the cast-off dress clothes of the German army that had been discarded at the beginning of the war. All had their stories written on their faces. The fresh and ruddy-cheeked men had invariably been captured recently; the wan and emaciated faces, some of them quite heart-breaking to look at, belonged to men who had been suffering long years of captivity. The British, I thought, looked worst of all.

From Dun to Verdun we passed again through that terrifying country that had been ravaged and desolated by four years of constant combats. Brioules, Brabant, Samogneux, Regnéville, Vacherauville—so many ruins. Bras and Charny wiped from the map. At the last-named places we entered the ring of fortresses that surround Verdun—the famous circle that the Germans penetrated but



Dun-sur-Meuse

INTO LUXEMBOURG

never broke, for its watchword was the defiant "They shall not pass."

The terrible Côtes du Poivre and de Froide Terre; the blasted valley, the dead and withered hillsides that had reverted to lunar solitudes; the dugouts, muddy, soaked and beaten by the elements; the camouflaged emplacements for the heavy guns; the trenches winding interminable, like mole tracks, up and down and over the tops of the hills; a few scattered stumps of trees standing in acres and acres of wire entanglements—these composed the sinister landscapes that finally terminated at Verdun, lying smashed but undaunted, behind its ring of hills.

Along the way we had seen but few soldiers. But Verdun itself was alive with poilus and Yanks, and we found to our great surprise, quartered in the famous citadel, our own department of G. H. Q., G 2-D. So for a day or two we remained in the city, sketching its ruined streets, its cathedral and the battered Bishop's Palace that adjoins it, sleeping and taking our meals in the citadel, a veritable underground city, capable of housing two divisions in its mess-halls, kitchens, dormitories, assembly rooms, and cinemas.

THE AMERICAN FRONT

When we had gathered as much information as we could as to the future movements of our army, we returned to Neufchâteau to get ready for our long trek to the Rhine.

We started on that memorable journey on November 24th, proceeding by way of Toul and Pont-à-Mousson, at which place we stopped for a time to sketch the town and its defenses that we had never been able to see before. Then we crossed the Moselle by the temporary wooden bridge that fills the gap made by dynamiting the old stone structure, whose parapets were still strongly defended by the gablons and wattled revetments placed there at the beginning of the war.

Turning northward we proceeded through what had always been a No Man's Land, dangerous and difficult of access. Now its undefended trenches, its deserted roads with their elaborate camouflage already tumbling down, its abandoned fields of wire and *trous de loup* plainly told the story that the war was at an end.

At Vittonville all the signs became German and just beyond it we crossed the border into the old province of Lorraine that had been wrested from France in 1870.

INTO LUXEMBOURG

At Jouy-aux-Arches we had a puncture and stopped the car to repair it under the tall arches of the Roman aqueduct that Drusus built to supply Divodurum (Metz) with water.

It was very cold and I was stamping my feet on the stone pavement to warm them, when a door opened behind me and I heard a voice say "Come in and get warm." Turning my head, I perceived a toothless old woman, bent and rheumatic, bowing and smiling invitingly. I went in and she placed me a chair by the stove, from whose oven she extracted a hot brick which she wrapped in some sack-
ing and put under my feet.

"Ah, monsieur," she said, "how happy I am to see you! How much we owe to you Americans! For nearly fifty years we French of Lorraine have groaned under the German yoke. I was a girl when we were separated from our own country, and my husband and I, all our lives, have prayed to be delivered. He always said, 'The day will come,' and he believed it. But alas, he passed away last year just before his prayers were answered—died of privations. Could he but have lived to see this day! He would have died so happy." And she went on to tell me of their suffering so near the front and to

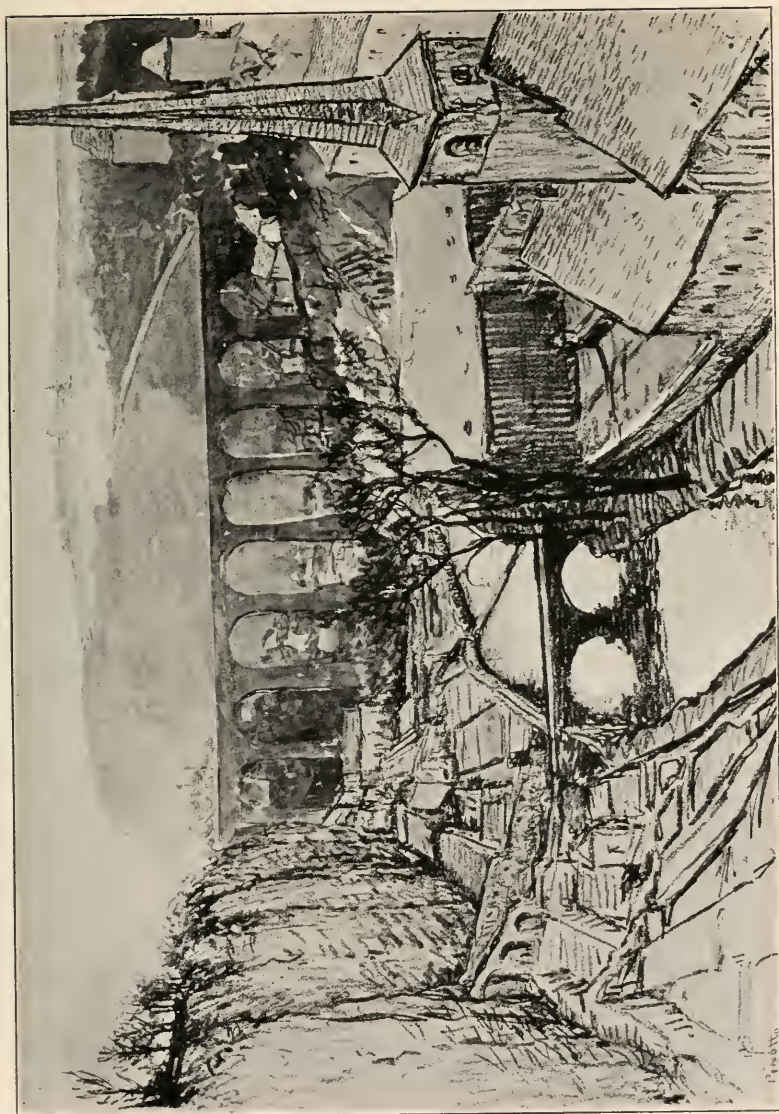
THE AMERICAN FRONT

show me her single bit of black bread, hard as a bullet and dark in color as a chocolate cake, that nevertheless had been parsimoniously measured out and rationed to each inhabitant.

The tall arches of the old Roman aqueduct that towered above her humble cottage were decked with flags and bunting, and at the entrance to each village, as we proceeded, floral arches had been erected, bearing messages of welcome: "Honor to the Allied Armies," "Hail to our Victorious Troops," "Vive la France! Vive l'Amérique!"

At the entrance to the suburbs of Metz stood a larger and more pretentious arch, and the streets of the faubourg were thickly studded with flags, many of them of that same home-made variety that I have described at Sedan.

We lunched in a hotel that fronts on a Place where some huge German Emperor lay prone upon the ground, crumpled under the weight of his great bronze horse, hauled from the pedestal that stood empty beside him. The main square of the city, in front of the majestic Cathedral, was packed with throbbing French army motors and filled with officers in horizon-blue, one of whom pointed out to



Valley of the Alzette, Luxembourg

INTO LUXEMBOURG

me a statue of the Kaiser, standing in a niche on a buttress. William II, in his presumption, had caused it to be erected in place of one of the prophet Daniel and it now wore manacles, and was decorated with the inscription, "Sic Transit Gloria Mundi."

Our next objective was Thionville, a considerable town, surrounded by foundries and situated in the very heart of the great Lorraine iron-mines. We had some difficulty in finding the road to it until we remembered that its German name was Diedenhofen! On this, the first Sunday of its occupation, its streets were gay with bunting and packed from curb to curb with French soldiers, laughing, joking, talking, and walking arm in arm with the comely girls of Lorraine, who had donned for the occasion their brightest and prettiest national costumes.

The roads outside the city were teeming with American divisions on the move, coming up from the Bassin de Bri y and from Longwy to take up their positions along the Luxembourg frontier. Our headquarters were then in Luxembourg itself and to this city we now proceeded.

When we entered the animated capital of the

THE AMERICAN FRONT

Grand Duchy we found its streets packed with a Sunday throng—a crowd so dense that it seemed as if the entire population of the city had poured itself into the one broad main street. There was a liberal sprinkling of khaki in the crowd but most of our troops were quartered outside of the city in towns scattered along the roads that led toward the German frontier. Though the national flag was everywhere in evidence and though most of the shop-windows displayed colored prints and post-cards of the faces of all the Allied rulers or military commanders, nowhere could I discover a portrait of the grand duchess.

Neither the city nor its people, to the casual observer, showed any trace of damage or suffering. They seemed in fact to have benefited by some special dispensation, the city having been reserved, I fancy, as a permanent sort of rest area for the German officers. We supped that night in the white-and-gold dining-room of the principal hotel. Civilians, handsomely dressed ladies, well-trained young waiters serving excellent though expensive food, were unusual and surprising sights. Though there were many American officers in the room, it was really a “peace-time dinner.”

INTO LUXEMBOURG

Afterward we went to the Casino or club. All Luxembourg was there, all Luxembourg in the democratic sense. The café was packed; up-stairs there was music and dancing. I watched the crowd with the greatest interest, for the German physiognomy was everywhere apparent and the whole atmosphere of the place was distinctly "Boche," resembling in every particular some German Verein in East Fifty-Ninth Street. Yet by word and action the people were receiving us with open arms, happy, they said, to be freed from German rule and assuring us repeatedly that no Prussian officer had ever been admitted within the precincts of this club. Many of the men were wearing bits of red ribbon in their buttonholes to show their republican beliefs, and when I questioned them they all professed strong pro-French sympathies.

For several days we lingered about the city which is exceptionally picturesque, especially those parts of it called the Grund and the Pfaffenthal, that lie in a profound valley worn by the Alzette as it makes its way through the hills that are crowned by the massive ramparts of the Oberstadt or old town.

We also visited the areas about the city that were occupied by the American troops, which had, by

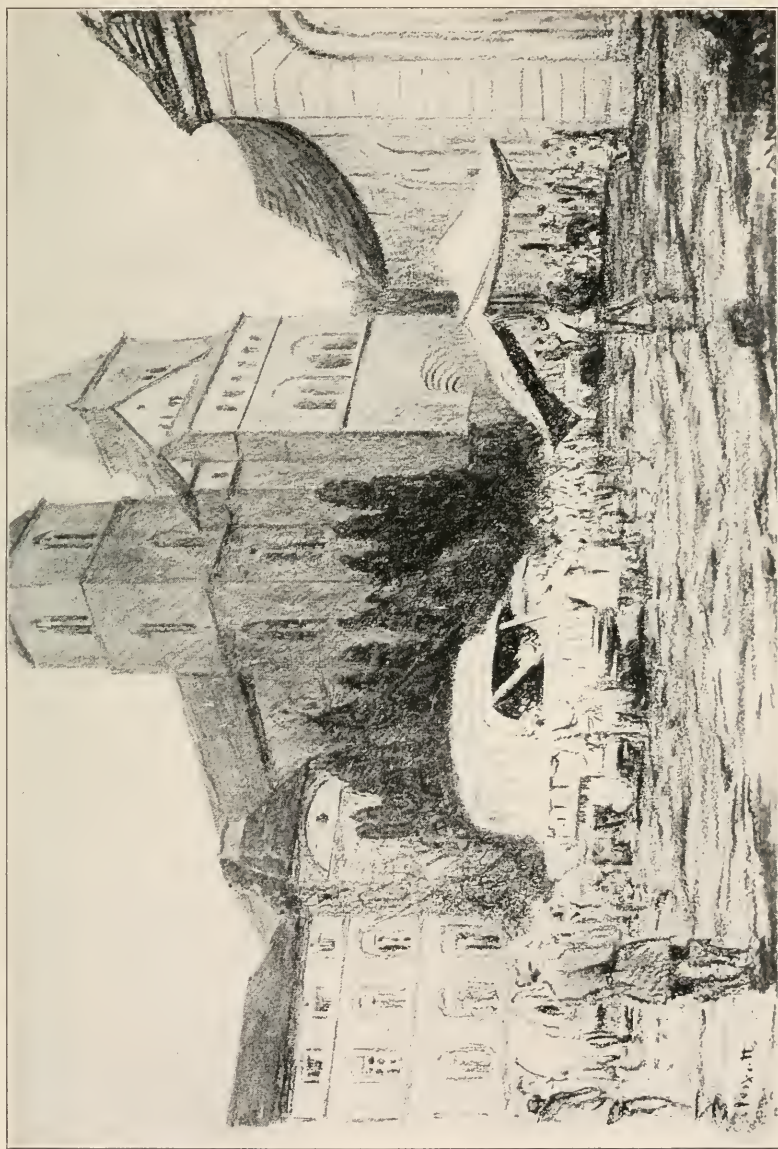
THE AMERICAN FRONT

now, moved up and were taking their positions along the Sure and Moselle from Diekirch to Sierck, there to await the order to cross the frontier into Germany.

From Diekirch eastward down the valley of the Sure we found the Marines quartered in all the villages and their sentries, doubled, patrolling the river bank, keeping an ever-watchful eye upon the opposite shore, where the German sentinels were plainly visible. Here and there we passed picturesque little groups, assembled round camp-fires, trying to keep themselves warm, for the air was wet and cold. And I remember being struck by the sight of an officer's tunic hanging over a chair by a window with the second gold chevron newly sewed on, the right to wear it having just been attained by the Second Division.

Around Echternach we found our friends of the Thirty-Second with one of their P. C.'s established in the spacious courtyard of the old Benedictine Abbey that is the chief architectural adornment of the town. The stone bridge across the Sure was guarded by a strong detachment surrounded by a crowd of admiring youngsters.

Following down the river a little farther, we reached



Men of the Thirty-Second Division in the Court of the Abbey, Echternach

INTO LUXEMBOURG

Wasserbillig, where the Sure joins the Moselle to form the greater stream whose valley was to be our main road to Coblenz and the Rhine. Large black letters on a sign-board, "Trier 13 km.," tempted us sorely to cross the bridge and go on into Germany, but the bridge guards would never have allowed us to pass and we could still see German sentinels patrolling the opposite bank.

Ascending the Moselle we found the First Division billeted in the villages all the way to Remick. Their guard patrols were drilling on the little tongues of land spotted along the river; their artillery was parked in the fields; their horses were being watered and cared for. The peasants looked on apathetically, I thought, and seemed even a bit hostile, for, I believe, they and the clergy who dominate them still adhered at that time to the grand duchess's party.

By the end of November our troops were all in position, their transport had moved up and everything was in readiness for their advance into Germany. All that was lacking was the order from the High Command for the Allied Armies of Occupation to move forward in unison across the German border.

II

TO THE RHINE AND BEYOND

THAT order finally came and a few days later we crossed the Sure at Wasserbillig, where the sign-post had tempted us before, and in a short half-hour were motoring through the streets of Treves, having our first glimpse of Germany in war-time.

The flags and arches that had greeted the retiring German army had entirely disappeared. All looked strangely normal and peaceful. We were shown to good rooms, comfortably heated, at the Porta Nigra Hotel. Our windows overlooked the great black arch begun by Cæsar in the first century, but never completed—one of the most remarkable Roman remains north of the Alps, for Augusta Trevirorum was so important a colony that the Emperors themselves at times came to live in it, a fact to which the ruins of their palaces and baths still testify.

TO THE RHINE AND BEYOND

During the days that followed the Great War, Treves was again to take an important place in history and receive hosts of distinction. First our own American advance G. H. Q. moved up to it and used it as its headquarters. Then Foch himself came here to meet the German delegates and precise and affirm the exact terms and prolongations of the armistice, so that the city became the centre of the network that controlled the Allied Armies of Occupation.

As I have said, it had remained quite normal. After supper, a simple and breadless meal, I took a walk about the city. Its shops were brightly lighted and filled with attractive wares. The people looked neatly dressed though their shoes were not of leather. Though but a few miles from the border, all seemed so tranquil, so undisturbed that my gorge rose within me as I walked down street after street, where handsome houses stood intact, their windows freshly curtained, their door-steps neatly swept, and I thought of all the devastation that I had seen, of the sufferings that I had witnessed, of the homes systematically robbed and pillaged, and in my mind I contrasted the forlorn refugees wandering they

THE AMERICAN FRONT

knew not whither with these smug middle-class people who even now were strumming their pianos and singing in their comfortable homes.

We only spent one night in Treves, for we were anxious to reach Coblenz next evening, it being the goal of our ambition, the city whose name to the Americans spelt "victory," its occupation bringing our troops into the very heart of the enemy's country.

As far as Wittlich we followed a broad highway that had been very badly cut up by the iron-tired trucks of the retiring German army. The inhabitants stood in their doorways, silent, furtively watching us as we passed. The children, on the contrary, dashed out from doors and alley-ways, and, at the risk of their lives, boisterously greeted the honk-honk of our horn.

Every little while we would overtake one of our marching columns—sometimes a battalion of infantry, swinging along in columns of four, with only their light equipment upon their backs and looking their very best in brand-new uniforms; sometimes a battery of field-artillery with its glistening guns no longer camouflaged, its animals well-groomed, its



American Trucks in a Side-Street, Montabaur

TO THE RHINE AND BEYOND

standards, uncased, flapping gayly in the breeze; sometimes a quartermaster's outfit with its mule-drawn wagons covered, like the prairie-schooners of other days, with new canvas tops and followed by a jangling array of freshly painted water-tanks and field-kitchens. For the entire equipment of our Army of Occupation had been renewed throughout, and was now well calculated to impress the people of the occupied region.

For hours we wriggled past these moving columns, noting, on the men's left shoulders, either the bright red arrow of the Thirty-Second or the T. O. of the Ninetieth. Posters marked with the same emblems, pasted on trees and walls, indicated the road to follow and guided us finally to Alf, where we found ourselves upon the banks of the Moselle again.

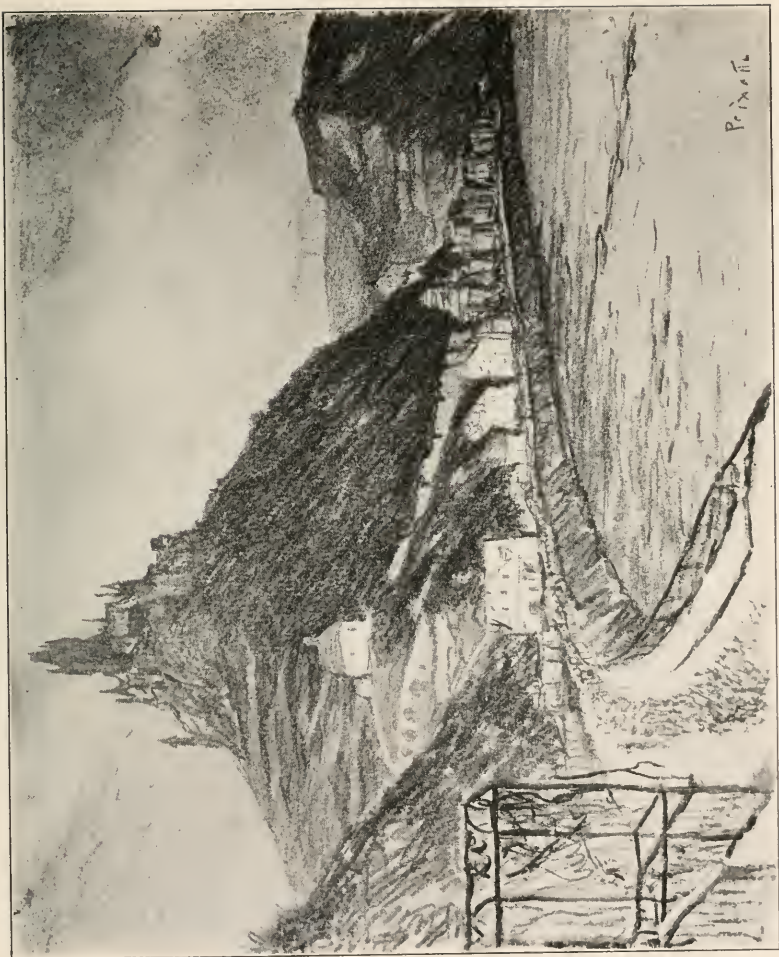
From here on the road skirted the river, which, in its many windings, had greatly widened. The hills on either hand rose higher and more majestic, their purple flanks ribbed and striped with gray stone walls that shore up the terraces whereon grow the Graachers, the Piesporters, and the other wines for which the valley is famous. The villages too grew older and more picturesque as we descended

THE AMERICAN FRONT

the river. In Bremm a painter could linger for weeks; Beilstein has been pictured on canvas and in engravings for centuries; while, as a climax to these scenes of more intimate charm, Cochem's fantastic outline suddenly appeared silhouetting the battlements and towers of its ancient Schloss against the sky.

Down both banks of the river our troops were pouring, diminutive, interminable caravans, strangely dwarfed by the majesty of their surroundings. At a point somewhat below Cochem we were obliged to take our motor across the river on a ferry, a slow but amusing operation that delayed us until four o'clock. We now found ourselves in the full tide of the First Division, the unit that was advancing in the lead and was to be the first to enter Coblenz. For some distance beyond Treis we continued to pass its regiments, marching stolidly along, weary, though they would not admit it, plodding doggedly on toward the ultimate goal.

When we had at last passed the foremost battalion with its major marching at its head, the road opened clear before us, and for the last twenty kilometres or so we speeded up with nothing at all to stop us.



P. 188

The Moselle at Cochem



TO THE RHINE AND BEYOND

At the entrance to the city we were halted by two American sentries who carefully examined our papers; a moment later we were again stopped by a mounted captain, who politely informed us that no one was allowed to enter the city but G 2-D, but that, luckily, meant us. So, without any further trouble, we now found ourselves gliding down the quiet streets of Coblenz. Only one American detachment had as yet entered the city—a battalion that had been sent in ahead to guard the stores, motor-trucks, and rolling stock that were being turned over by the Germans according to the terms of the armistice.

We were assigned to rooms in the Coblenzerhof, a handsome new hotel that had been finished just before the war, and that our army had taken over as its permanent headquarters. There were as yet, however, only a dozen officers in it—members of a special mission, headed by Colonel Ray, that was arranging matters connected with the occupation.

The Coblenzerhof stands on the Rhine Quay directly facing the Bridge of Boats. My room was on the third floor and its windows and balcony commanded an extensive view up and down the river.

THE AMERICAN FRONT

Opposite, rose the precipitous heights of Ehrenbreitstein, crowned with its grim old fortress. Up the river the gardens of the Kaiserin Augusta Anlagen extended for nearly a mile, while toward the north, at the confluence of the Moselle and the Rhine, on a tongue of land, quite sacred to the Teuton heart, called the Deutsches Eck, I could just see, half hidden by the houses of the quay, the colossal Denkmal or monument erected to the memory of the first German Emperor, builder of the empire, founder of the proud dynasty of the Hohenzollerns, William I, Prince of Prussia, who here in Coblenz, one of his favored Residenzstadts, matured the plans for his new Prussian army.

And now the mighty strength of that formidable army and of that empire that was builded upon the theory that might makes right was gone and broken forever, and on the quay below me I saw sentries in khaki from far-away America guarding the bridge-head over the Rhine in the name of liberty, justice, and humanity!

As I left my room with these thoughts in my mind I saw, in the dimly lighted hall, an officer coming toward me, a slender, youthful figure that I took

TO THE RHINE AND BEYOND

naturally for that of an American. But a characteristic click of the heels and the automatic salute betrayed at once his nationality, and I realized that I had passed a German. When I went into the dining-room I found quite a group of them, officers who had been left behind to arrange matters with our mission.

I learned that evening that the First Division was to enter Coblenz at about noon on the morrow.

Promptly on the hour the heads of the columns appeared at the upper ends of the various main thoroughfares and silently but steadily poured down into the very heart of the city. Most of the inhabitants remained indoors with their windows tightly closed and the few that were walking in the streets went indifferently along without as much as turning their heads to look at the marching regiments, acting, in fact, as if American troops moving through their town were an every-day occurrence.

The main columns halted and formed by battalions in two squares that open in front of the Schloss or Royal Palace, a favorite residence of the Empress Augusta until her death. Here, as well as in other squares about the city, the soldiers stacked

THE AMERICAN FRONT

their arms, unslung their packs, and settled down to a much-needed rest.

The field-kitchens began to smoke and the smell of "slum" and hot coffee filled the air. What the marching troops—the entrance of an Army of Occupation into their city—had failed to do, these culinary odors accomplished. First the children, then the housewives, drawn by these odors as if by irresistible magnets, began to issue from the houses, gathering furtively at first, then more and more boldly, around the steaming wagons. Sentries with fixed bayonets good-humoredly but firmly tried to keep them back, calling out in stentorian voices, "Get back there. Keep off," and the like. The soldiers lined up with their mess-kits, then, when these were filled, went off to sit in the grass or along the stone copings, to eat their food, surrounded by envious crowds, gazing longingly at the savory stew, the steaming hot coffee, and the thick slices of white bread that the men were only too inclined to share with the children.

Though tinged with a distinct touch of humor, the picture was in the main a pathetic one, telling its tale of months of privation.

TO THE RHINE AND BEYOND

On the day following the entrance of the army into Coblenz we made a trip up and down the Rhine as far as the American sector extended, that is, thirty kilometres northward to Sinzig and thirty kilometres southward to St. Goar. Our sentinels, doubled, as we had seen them on the Sure and Moselle along the Luxembourg frontier, were now patrolling the left bank of the Rhine, across which as yet no troops had moved.

The majestic river, scene of so much history, so many legends dear to the Teuton heart, seemed saddened in the cold gray light of mid-December. From crag and hilltop its storied castles looked down: Schloss Hammerstein, Schloss Rheineck, seat of the von Bethmann-Hollwegs; the Stolzenfels, commanding its vast panorama up and down the ancient waterway; the Marburg, most imposing of all the Rhenish strongholds, poking its towers and battlements into the very clouds themselves; the "Hostile Brothers," the "Cat and Mouse," and Rheinfels grouping themselves about St. Goar in one of the most romantic stretches of the river, and the Lorelei itself, centre of song and legend, rising gray and grim out of the silent river.

THE AMERICAN FRONT

But now no pleasure-parties, no tourist caravans were visiting these historic scenes. Instead, the towns and villages were filled with khaki, with soldiers that had poured down through the rugged hills of the Eifel from Daun and Prüm, and through the valley of the Moselle to add a chapter to the history of the Rhineland that never will be dear to the hearts of future Teuton generations.

I witnessed the crowning event of that chapter of history next morning, the morning of the 13th of December.

Just before dawn I heard a sound I had been listening for: the sound of shuffling feet on the wooden Bridge of Boats below my window, and, looking out, could see, in the first dim light of day, a long yellowish serpent crawling slowly across the bridge. Longer and longer this serpent grew, until its head had disappeared under the railroad viaduct on the opposite bank of the river. Yet its sinuous body, bristling with guns and plaited like chain mail with steel helmets, kept ever wriggling and writhing across the river. Tramp, tramp, tramp, went its thousands of marching feet—but no other sound broke the stillness of that early morning.



First Americans Crossing the Rhine

The first American troops crossed the Rhine just after daybreak on the Bridge of Boats at Coblenz

TO THE RHINE AND BEYOND

This was but the beginning—the advance-guard—of what went on for days as our army crossed the Rhine to occupy the bridge-head beyond.

Toward nine o'clock I saw the first American flag go over. The morning was gray and misty with a drizzling rain. The heights of Ehrenbreitstein were wrapped in mystery. The river flowed sullen and leaden, and the khaki-clad columns mingled with this general grayness. Then, against all this monotony of tone, there appeared a radiant object—a brilliant spot of red, white, and blue, edged with its golden fringes, the silken regimental colors of the infantry, “Old Glory” triumphant, carrying its message of humanity and justice to the peoples beyond the Rhine.

Could only all those who had made sacrifices at home, all those who had come over to France to help make this victory possible, all those who had given their lives even for the cause, have lived to see this moment, they would not have considered that they had lived or died in vain.

For hours I watched the columns moving on over the Schiffbrücke; it seemed as if I could never see enough of them. The townspeople too had now

THE AMERICAN FRONT

come out and were standing along the curbstones frankly admiring the splendid appearance and equipment of our men. "How young they look; how handsome!" I frequently heard about me. How strong too—that army that their leaders had assured them would never cross the seas, and, even if it did come, would only be fitted for labor and not for years be ready for combat.

Yet upon its flags could now be inscribed the names of many a glorious victory: Cantigny, Belleau, Château-Thierry, St. Mihiel, and the fierce battles in the Argonne.

These were the flags that now were crossing the Rhine. My last journey took me over with them, through the crowded roads, to sketch the towns across the river in which our men were to be billeted in quaint half-timbered houses like those in old German woodcuts, and especially to see Montaubaur, a highly picturesque town in the centre of the bridgehead that the First Division was using as its headquarters. When this work was finished I returned to Coblenz, ready to go back to Neufchâteau.

But before I left I saw one final picture—a picture that will live in my memory as long as I live.

TO THE RHINE AND BEYOND

I had changed hotels and was now at the Monopol that fronts on one of the city's most important squares. Breakfast was served in a room that faces the street, and is on a level with it, separated from it by only a sheet of glass hung with flimsy muslin curtains. A group of German officers occupied the table next to us—a different group than I had seen before—several junior officers and a major, the latter a typical rigid martinet of the type that we associate, and rightly, with the worst of Prussian militarism.

We were about to begin our meal when an infantry column came down the street and just as it reached the window at which we sat the band at its head struck up a stirring and triumphant Sousa march. One of the younger German officers impulsively jumped up and, with boyish curiosity, held back the muslin curtain the better to see the American troops. Their colonel rode by at the head of his regiment, and then came the Stars-and-Stripes again, uncased, flaunting its bright folds in the fresh morning breeze.

I watched the Prussian major's face and it well repaid my scrutiny. From a deadly pallor it turned

THE AMERICAN FRONT

pink, and then, as the blood mounted to it, crimson, until I thought he would be seized with a stroke of apoplexy. Every muscle was tense and rigid, but he never moved, remaining still and silent, with folded arms, watching. My cup of happiness was full. I had seen a typical Prussian officer humiliated in the heart of his own country.

570.9
24

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Santa Barbara

THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE
STAMPED BELOW.

Series 9482

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 294 930 3



3 1205 00435 7610

js

